

THE INFANT CLASS  
IN THE  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
CHARLES REED.

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The infant class in the  
Sunday School

THE INFANT CLASS  
IN THE  
SUNDAY SCHOOL.

An Essay:

TO WHICH THE COMMITTEE OF THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION  
ADJUDGED THE FIRST PRIZE IN 1851.

BY  
CHARLES REED.

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SECOND EDITION.

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M.DCCC.LX.



## ORIGINAL PREFACE.

*“IN all the districts, great numbers of children who had been in regular attendance on Sunday schools for a period of from five to nine years, were found, on examination, to be not only altogether ignorant of Christian principles, doctrine, and precepts, but they knew nothing whatever of any of the events of Scripture History, nor anything even of the names most commonly occurring in the Scriptures.”*

THIS passage occurs in a Government Report, published a few years since. I do not quote it, as a believer in its truth, for my belief respecting this sweeping declaration is, that it is most untrue; it is a libel on the noble and self-sacrificing exertions of my fellow-labourers in this department of service, the Sunday School Teachers of Great Britain, to whom I respectfully dedicate this little volume.

I have, however, another object in view in placing it at the head of these prefatory remarks, for my conviction is, that though false as a whole, the assertion may have some truth in it, and if this be so, it were well that we should seek to profit by it.

That the Sunday School system is not perfect, no one will venture to deny, and that in much it has failed, we are all prepared, in deep humility, to admit. If there be failure, there must be some adequate cause. What is this cause? This is a question which in the present day eminently concerns us.

In the midst of conflicting opinions, I may perhaps be allowed to ask, whether we have not committed a great mistake in limiting the invitation to our Sunday schools to children of seven or eight years of age. For my own part, I am inclined to believe, that the want of power and efficiency, pointed out in bitter tones by our enemies, and more or less deplored by us all, may be traced very much

to this prevailing custom. Now, supposing this to be the case, will the reader permit me to suggest a few queries for consideration.

Is it a fact, that with redundant school accommodation, infants have been excluded, almost as a rule?

Is it a fact, that as the result of this exclusion, little children, among the poor especially, have been left without adequate provision on the Sabbath for their religious instruction?

Is it a fact, that by far the larger proportion of such children, on coming to the Sunday school, are kept in alphabet or spelling classes for a lengthened period?

Is it a fact, that these elementary classes, as a rule, are under the care of mere monitorial agency?

Is it a fact, that a large number of our children are not attached to any single school, but give themselves to a roving career, passing in and out of many schools, and finally quitting the means of instruction altogether?

Is it a fact, that we have great difficulty in holding our children as senior scholars, and that the church and congregation present but a poor representation of the numbers we enrol in our books?

What shall we say to these things? I fear there is too much reason to believe that, in all our schools, we suffer to some extent in these particulars, and to those who agree in my opinion, I commend these pages, which are given to the press rather with a view to assist in the solution of an admitted difficulty, than from any idea that they contain much that is novel or specially instructive.

I wish to add, that, while in giving my idea of THE WORK, AND HOW TO DO IT, I have sought to confine my remarks to *practical* points, upon which little diversity of judgment exists; I alone am responsible for the opinions expressed in the course of its discussion.

CHARLES REED.

HACKNEY, Dec. 1, 1851.

## PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

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WITHIN the ten years since this Essay was first put before the public, no question has attracted more attention among Sunday School Teachers than that of “our Infant Classes.” Where they did exist, they are improved and strengthened; where they were not, they are now found; and it is now—so far as our large towns are concerned—the rule, rather than the exception, to have an Infant Class in each school. The admission of the youngest children—the almost entire abandonment of alphabet and spelling teaching—the substitution of efficient teachers in the Infant Classes for monitors—the introduction of the collective methods of instruction, in place of the individual or rotatory mode—are all changes, which are the result of careful thought, and free discussion, in our schools, our magazines, and our conferences.

If this Essay has contributed in any degree to these important ends, the highest desire of the writer has been accomplished; and he takes this opportunity of acknowledging the kindness of numerous readers, who have favoured him with many queries, which have frequently resulted in most interesting and profitable correspondence. If the Census of 1861 should embrace the educational returns of the country, as in 1851, it is quite certain that one of the most gratifying results will be the proof of the wonderful advance of the Sunday School in its primary and elementary departments.

CHARLES REED.

HACKNEY, *May 1, 1860.*



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# THE INFANT CLASS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.



## CHAPTER I.

### ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS.

1. *The Position of the Sunday School.* 2. *Institution of Infant Day Schools.* 3. *Want of provision for Infants on the Sabbath.* 4. *Objections urged against the admission of Infants to the Sunday School considered.*

1. THE history of the Sunday School has yet to be written, and a noble record it will be of deeds of pious zeal, and self-denying toil. Already, the political and social writers of our day assign to it a prominent place among the institutions of the land; and he who, at the close of the present century, inscribes the annals of Britain, will have to testify to the fact, that while of recent origin and very humble pretensions, it has exerted an influence for good, altogether unparalleled in the history of modern times. "We have seen the Sunday school

institution spring up from nothing, till it comprises 250,000 teachers, and 2,000,000 scholars, with an average of five years' schooling for each child."\* Scarcely suited to the impatient demands of the present day, its calm and safe progression is not calculated to satisfy the craving for excitement which has of late extended its influence, even into the religious world. In the midst of majestic enterprises, and imposing schemes, its course lies along an humble path. Its dwelling is amongst the poor; its objects are chiefly the children of neglect and ignorance. Its machinery is no curious effort of skill; its conductors shine not in the ranks of science and wealth. It has indeed a grandeur, but it is the grandeur of simplicity. Divested of every worldly attraction, it still possesses many features of interest to the Christian. It associates itself with childhood, around which seems to cling all that is left of loveliness in our sin-defaced nature. It marks the expanding intellect, and seeks to direct the early aspirations of the mind to the purest elements of truth. Its present position is remarkable. It stands a monument of voluntary and devoted effort, the wonder and astonishment of its friends, while its very enemies are constrained to offer the tribute of public gratitude, admitting that, in times of national crisis and threatened convulsion, "the Sabbath school system has been the salvation

\* "Lecture on the Progress and Efficiency of the Voluntary Principle." By Edward Baines, Esq., M.P.

of this empire ;" and thus, triumphing over ignorance and prejudice, the sneer of ridicule with which it was once assailed is changed into a meed of well-merited praise. We must allow, that at first the system was rude and imperfect ; its plans were ill adapted, and the whole scheme little comprehended. A gradual development has, however, by degrees, brought it much nearer perfection ; and in common with its truest friends, looking for better things than have yet been seen, we claim for it a position as immeasurably superior in public opinion to that which it now occupies, as the present is an advance upon its lowly origin. It is a home mission, possessed of every element of power, catholicity, and expansive effort.

2. England was, we believe, the first to apply the principles of Infant day school training. America caught the idea, and connected it with the Sunday school. The philosophy of the plan was apparent to those who looked into it. The results of the experiment were most satisfactory. England and Scotland in their turn adopted the idea, and, in connexion with a considerable number of our Sunday schools, infant classes have at length been formed. It was a new thing. Many looked on with considerable misgiving, or undisguised alarm, but more with lively interest ; while there were not wanting some who, animated by the steady faith of the good Cranfield, were bold enough, with him, to predict "a larger harvest from this infant training

than from any other branch of effort in relation to the young."

3. It is calculated that one-fourth of the children in our Sunday schools are unable to read, and that there are considerably above 200,000 infants, between the ages of two and five, out of a population of 2,918,345 children of the working classes alone, who attend the day school, but a large majority of whom are not found in the Sunday school, and there is little doubt that the Census of 1851 will show a largely augmented number.\*

The usual practice has been to exclude from the Sunday school, children under five years of age. Against them the rule has been framed, and the door barred. If a little intruder, full of curiosity, has come with an elder brother for once, "just to see," he has been tolerated rather than welcomed. He has confirmed the belief that children of this age are fretful, because it is natural that tears should flow where children see not the face of love, and restlessness will prevail where ingenuity finds not out a plan to fix attention, and interest the mind. *A, B, C, and a-b, ab,* will never be an attractive lesson, and in an infant Sabbath class we hold it to be an unnecessary one. But let this be as it may, here are 200,000 children of tenderest years, either coming already, or willing to enter our doors when opened, with hearts warm with confiding love,

\* This was the fact, the return being two hundred and eighty-four thousand and seventy-two.

and prepared to receive from us their earliest impressions of religious truth.

4. It would be difficult to enumerate all the reasons why the movement in favour of the establishment of infant classes has been so long delayed and undervalued. They have been very numerous, and in instancing a few we only present a specimen of the many still left unadduced. And surely, when all good efforts have had to struggle through many conflicts, battling with crude prejudices and ignorant opposition, it is no wonder that there should in this case have been obstacles and discouragements.

First, then, we hear of the cruelty of separating parent and child, a fallacy long since exploded in the case of the infant day schools; and yet the allegation against the infant Sabbath class is that it is an invasion of the parent's prerogative. There is, however, a more perfect parallelism in the two cases than the objectors are disposed to admit. "The one," they say, "is for secular teaching, the other for religious. Parents may devolve the one on the teacher, but not the other." Why not? They do it on the Monday because their occupations prevent attention, and because their own inability pleads excuse. And are there not weightier reasons why they should, for the few Sabbath hours infancy allows, place their little ones under efficient religious training and holy influences? Looking at the great proportion of the parents of our Sunday

school children, (who, in England, belong not so much to the congregation as to the street,) who will say that they are fit to be instructors of the young?

We admit, to the fullest extent, the parental obligation (which nothing can absolve) to train up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but we still believe that, "when the day school shall have performed its functions, when all parents, to the best of their ability, shall have discharged their obligations, enough will always remain for the utmost effort of the Sunday school. It is easy to conceive of a time when institutions for the support of foreign missions will expire, and also when home missionary establishments will be no longer called for. There is a point, up to which ministers and edifices for God may be so multiplied, as to render such institutions almost superfluous; but the labours of the Sunday school can never be dispensed with. Its necessity is founded on the permanent wants of human nature."

Ours has been too much a redeeming influence, it is true, but this only proves that we have had to do what should have been done in infancy at home; and if it be not done there, why should not the infant school anticipate the want? From the moment the infant crawls to the doorway,—is subject to the influences of the street, hears the voice of profanity, looks on at the Sabbath-breaking of its own parents, or their neighbours, and begins to long for the pleasures of sin in their fascinating forms,—let us

claim the child. Let us go to the too often unhappy home, and gather the little ones to our retreat —scatter the flowers of affection about their path, and make happy the otherwise dreary or broken hours of the Sabbath. And if the parents have a love of good things, and are walking in the way they should go, the fact of their having knowledge does not insure their fitness to communicate it. This accounts for the fact that even pious parents speak but little to their own children; and how frequently, when it is done, it is the mere formal teaching, so different to that which is intended in the Divine command. Still, we do believe that thousands desire for their children that which they have but little power to teach.

“The poorest poor  
Long for some moments, in a weary life,  
When they can know and feel that they have been  
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers out  
Of some small blessings.”

Then, we are told, infants *do come* under the present system—they are *not* shut out. Yes, some do, and their punishment is to sit upon the unsteady form with children twice their own age, with their little feet swinging in the air, till weariness and pain cause restlessness and noise, and the little culprits are sent home with a wholesome warning, not to come again till they are old enough. Or they are put into “alphabet classes,” beneath the severe discipline of monitorial care; where

they readily learn to dislike instruction, the hard symbols of which they see pointed out by the same weapon which administers ceaseless reproof.

Or, "*they are too young to be taught.*" "Poor little innocents! how unfit to make them learn at such a tender age." Innocents! how apt we are to forget! In the heart of the youngest reigns the giant evil Sin, and it will rule for ever there if it be not overthrown. Age does not affect the value of the *soul*. The gentle, open, simple little child is yet a child of wrath, a child of sin and sorrow, a moral and accountable creature. We would have all to be "lambs of the fold," but they must be brought in.

Then "*they are too young physically.* The infant brain will be over-excited and forced to undue exertion." This *may* be, but it *ought not* to be. The present mode of teaching (without understanding) letters, words, primers, and catechisms, may induce such weakness; but the cultivation of the senses, the impartation of ideas, and formation of habits, will never tend to such results. Never let it be supposed that intellectual and theological cramming is to be the thing aimed at. This were a grand and fundamental error, the perversion and abuse of the thing for which we plead. We agree with no such empiricism. Mr. Dunn says,\* "The religion of little children ought eminently to be an affection of the heart, grounded, indeed,

\* "Normal School Manual."

upon Scripture truth, the elements of which are intelligible to a little child, but not ramified into all the doctrinal discussions and mental developments which we sometimes 'survey with wonder.' Religion and knowledge must be united; but what we seek is not dogmatic theology, but that the sanctions and principles of religion should be manifest in the instructions and example of the teacher,—everything finding its end in God.

The *ignorance* of infants is assigned as a reason why they should not attend our schools. Are they ignorant? Of what? Of good things? Yet their minds are so active that they are always learning evil. Education is intended to rectify this. Its effort is remedial. Here is its legitimate scope for action. Are they doing *nothing* at home? It is not that they are too ignorant, but too learned. They are in training from life's very threshold. It is vain to say that, because they cannot read or spell, they are too ignorant for religious training.

Then we are told that "it is wrong to *bias* the mind by religious instruction." This is what is termed a philosophical objection. It would have no training prior to the power of exercising judgment. It says, "The child's religion cannot be a reasonable service; wait; suspend your operations." We cannot comply. No mind can be left empty till the years of discretion come. If truth do not enter in, falsehood will. It is an infidel proposal, whether it ask for delay in teaching reli-

gion, or its exclusion altogether, as in the present day the manner of some is. These are the men who hate our *training*, since it is the inclusive term, and involves religious culture, while they cry out for instruction, forgetting that in weaving the glorious fabric on which we are engaged, the warp needs a woof before the rich tapestry can be perfect. The same philosophy applied to other things would prove its utter futility. Practical education and moral training begin with the first dawn of consciousness. Trained in infancy children must be. It is for us to decide how and where, whether by chance, or by a system adapted to their natural constitution.

There are many other objections. Some demur to our making “*a play*” of teaching; a designation which they give to the ingenious devices of zealous teachers, who allow a little unbending of the tightened bow. Wolsey was wise in his generation, when he advocated the system here objected to. “At intervals,” he says, “attention should be relaxed. Even with his studies, pleasure should be so intimately blended, that a child may think it rather a game at learning than a task:” while Roger Ascham urges the teacher of children not to chide hastily, “for,” says he,\* “thou shalt both dull his wit, and discourage his diligence; but monish him gently. Love is better than fear, gentleness than beatings: but some teachers rather break

\* “Letter to the Master of the Ipswich School.”

than bend, and mar sooner than mend." We should object to levity, or even to the introduction of *all* the plans of the week-day school, but variety of exercise, change of posture and prevailing cheerfulness, must ever be upheld. With us difficult tasks and close confinement are discarded, and the powers of observation and reasoning cultivated. We call that "learning made easy," which by some is termed "cheating into knowledge."

Some again affirm that our attempts have proved "a failure," and others look doubtfully upon the "new invented scheme." In the present day men are not accustomed to condemn upon such grounds. We ask for that which all generous minds will give, a fair trial, that the results may be made to appear.

It is true there are but few thoroughly efficient infant classes at present;\* many of them are far from perfect, but it is too precipitate to talk of failure in the face of Wilderspin and Stow, and too early to return a verdict upon that which as yet affords incomplete evidence.

Thus we have in some measure traced the reasons why the movement in favour of the establishment of infant classes has been so long delayed, and undervalued. It has rather been the result of hesitation, fear, and prejudice on the part of those on

\* Writing in 1859, we must say that all over the land the advance of the infant class, as a section of school organization, is most encouraging.

whom the duty of their formation has devolved, than any want of good will and readiness on the part of parents and children, who provide and form the materials.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE REASONABLENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INFANT CLASS IN EVERY SUNDAY SCHOOL.

1. *The Success of the Infant Day School a potent argument.*
2. *Infancy the best period for creating good impressions.*
3. *Sympathy of Numbers, a valuable auxiliary in good training.*
4. *The capacity of Young Children to realize the leading Doctrines of Religion.*
5. *The incompleteness of the Sunday School without the Infant Class.*

1. THIS would appear to another class to be a self-evident proposition. Their usual, and often only difficulty, is to see a clear way to it. The existence of the infant day school, and its complete success, might supply a sufficient argument for them. The same children who go to the one on Saturday would come to the other on Sunday, if allowed. Many, whose age permits, do so already. Why not all? The mother, relieved in the hours of week-day toil by the day school, would fain go to the house of God on the Sabbath. She cannot, unless you relieve her of the charge of her little ones. She tells you they are good and obedient all the week with their teacher; why should they not be so in your class? Are the rules against it?

Re-consider your decision, and prepare the way for the entrance of a new order of mind. Do you wait to know the result? Take one infant; watch it through a training of four years, and then see it draughted into the main school. It is seven years old. What have those four years done? See the wide difference between what that child *is*, and what, in all probability, it would have been, had it not gained admission to your school till now. Let us be consistent, and not deny on the Sabbath that which we readily grant on the other days of the week.

2. Who will doubt the value of early training, or that *infancy is the best time for creating good impressions?* Wolsey leaves on record his judgment when he says, "The hope of the whole state rests on this stage of life, as that of the harvest on the blade of corn;" and that profound thinker, Locke, remarks, "The little or almost insensible impressions on our *tender infancies* have very important and lasting consequences, and then it is, as it is in the fountains of some rivers, when a gentle application of the hand turns the flexible waters into channels that make them take quite contrary courses, and by this little direction given them at first in the source, they receive different tendencies and arrive at last at very remote and distant places;\*" while President Edwards says, "Infancy is the

\* "Thoughts on Education."

season of impression ; then the feelings are tender, beyond any other time of life ; then the memory is most susceptible, and, at the same time, most tenacious ; then the conscience is not seared, and so soon as Divine truth can be introduced, it knows the voice of God.” And we may add, that while at every age God’s grace alone can save the soul, at this, if we may so speak, Divine power is less resisted, and Divine truth more kindly entertained.

Who can calculate the value of early years ? The dog and the horse are accustomed early to preparatory exercises, their temper and character is the subject of early thought, and they are checked and guided in a thousand ways, with a view to their future utility. The tree grows as the twig is bent. The muscles and joints of the child who is to be prepared for athletic or gymnastic feats, are put into systematic training while in their most supple state. The foot of the Chinese is bound in infancy. The husbandman scarce waits the birth of spring ere he prevents the dawn of the morning by breaking up the furrow for his seed. Are we not instructed by these things ? Does not the analogy hold good as respects the training of mind ? Nay, have we not the highest authority to make our efforts tell upon the earliest years in *training* children in the way they should go ? Are we to allow children to grow up ill, and expect that as men they will be good ? “ God forbid that it should be impossible for men to recollect themselves, and reform at

an advanced age ; but it is in no sort in the power of others to gain upon them—to turn them away from what is wrong, and enforce upon them what is right at that season of their lives, in the manner we might have done in early childhood.”\* A distinguished writer† says, “The moral training of a juvenile school is less effective by far than that of the infant, and for this plain reason, that the younger the child is, the fewer bad habits has the trainer to undo and eradicate.”

Men of the world admit the value of our agency. Politicians are constrained to admire, and those in highest station are ready to acknowledge, that “to the safety and regeneration of a people, a correct state of religious opinion and practice is essential, which can only be effected by proper attention to the early nurture of the mind.” So true is it that the training of infancy will have an inconceivable influence upon the welfare of the nation.

Our dominion is over the fountain; let us seek to purify it, and keep it pure. Let us believe that we may impress upon the mental tablet of our charge, traces which, made in the first years of life, deepen in their lines, and are seldom really effaced by the rough influence of opposing events in the vicissitudes of life. John Newton’s mother died when he was seven years old, but he testified that to her care he owed that bias to religion which,

\* Bishop Butler.

† Stow.

with the co-operating grace of God, reclaimed and brought him back to the paths of peace. Dr. Johnson relates that he never could forget the pious injunctions of his mother, given when he was too young to remember anything else. And we ourselves can all testify, and some with special feeling, that it was so with us. The morning dew is not more fleeting than this plastic period of the mind, on which we desire to operate. The moment the clay, soft and ductile, is on the wheel, that moment the potter commences his skilful manipulations. So let us put our hand to the work, and "leave our mark on the next generation."

It is the more necessary, as we cannot tell how long a time *we* may have to do the work. This is a thing beyond our control, and yet the wise mother who looks forward to a course of lengthened training begins in the beginning. We, however, are likely to lose our opportunity in a much briefer space, and ours, be it remembered, is only a Sabbath privilege.

3. Mr. Stow says that the great secret of training is to create the *sympathy of numbers*. It is not found in the family, but it is provided in the infant class, giving to it an advantage which home teaching seldom realises; hence while it should not be a substitute, it may be a valuable auxiliary. By it the powers of emotion are strengthened. Love begets love, and the little child, knowing that he is the object of love, spreads out the arms of his

truest affection in return. His heart is quite open to our influence and to truth.

Then, at this age, moral feelings respond easily to any call made upon them, and if wisely nurtured, the fine and noble qualities would become daily more influential, and at length give their rightful ascendancy. Dr. Combe says, respecting the moral feelings, "If children were not so perplexed by the contrast between the precepts and conduct of those around them, they would naturally become stronger and purer;" and the same remarks are true as regards religious feelings. In fact, early impression is the true key to the philosophy of infancy and right training. Why was the son of Napoleon put into the ranks as a common soldier, at seven years of age? Why, at the age of nine, did Hamilcar swear young Hannibal to an eternal enmity to Rome? And why did the poor Swedish clergyman place his only son in the garden, to cultivate flowers at six years of age, but that he might be, as Linnaeus undoubtedly was, the first botanist of his race. And so, since EDUCATION BEGINS WITH LIFE, let us consecrate the early years of childhood

"To nature's sweet affections and to God,"

and forget not how true is the classical figure applied to the mind of a little child,—

"The odours of the vine that first shall stain  
The virgin vessel, it will long retain."

4. The *capacity* of an infant to receive general instruction we suppose no one will seriously question. The division of opinion is rather as to the mode and time of imparting it. There are not a few, however, who doubt the capacity of a child to realise the leading doctrines of *religion*. Some one says, "The knowledge of earthly things a child acquires is a highway, along which he may be led to things heavenly and divine." Let *us* make use of it. "Let the first lesson of earth breathe the spirit of heaven, and when the high gifts of thought and speech are given to children, point them to Him who caused the sun to shine, the plant to grow, and the chirping bird to be joyful in its nest. Teach them that they are loved of this great Being, that they may love him in return. Mingle the majesty of His goodness with the elements of their thought. You will be surprised to see how soon the lisping lip may learn communion with the Father of mercies."\* All we say is, a child may give his heart to God, and man can do no more. This is the religious faith we want, and this willing obedience children can offer with acceptance. Light and sound appear to create little or no impression upon the new-born babe; but they are soon watched, and as they gratify, or awaken fear, distinct and living impressions are conveyed to the mind. The hand of the mother may shade off the too bright

\* Mrs. Sigourney.

rays of light, but by degrees her aim is to accustom the eye to meet it with joy ; and just as physical powers are developed, so are the intellectual, moral, and religious faculties of man. Keep distant objects out of view, and the eye becomes short-sighted ; so would we ever train the inward vision of infancy to the wider range, where the act of observation adds strength to strength. It is not the want of capacity in the child, but the want of faith in ourselves, that leads us to impart distinct notions of other things so much earlier than we implant the seeds of religious truth.

Religion is not to be put before the eye of the child as a bundle of abstract truths, nor in the form of chronological history, overwhelming the mind with facts and dates, so remote as to be beyond infantile conception. We must put a limit upon our direct religious instruction, but this circumscription can never shut out the distinctive features and first principles of Gospel truth. Nor do we find these hidden among theological technicalities, or in verbose disquisitions. The simplicity of Gospel truth is proverbial. It is not so high that we cannot attain unto it.

“O, how unlike the complex works of man,  
Heaven’s easy, artless, unencumbered plan !”

We find it blended in the lucid language of history and biography, narrative and parable, and nowhere more beautifully portrayed than in the life and teaching of Him who “spake as never man spake,”

adapting his gentle tones to the ear and capacity of the little child. Hearing these, the heart of infancy is always attracted by the charms of the narration, seldom dead to impression and appeal, and often ready to receive "truths that wake to perish never." The little one, pondering the love of the Saviour, grasps, with infant faith, the stretched-out hand of Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God ;" into which none shall enter who do not receive the kingdom even as a little child.

"O say not, dream not, heavenly notes  
To childish ears are vain,  
That the young mind at random floats,  
And cannot reach the strain.  
Dim or unheard, the words may fall,  
And yet the heaven-taught mind  
May learn the sacred air, and all  
The harmony unwind." .

Richard Baxter, Bishop Jebb, and others, all enforce this principle, so well explained by an intelligent writer in one of our own periodicals, who says: "In infant classes this higher order of education should be pursued, and the mental and moral faculties of children may readily be trained, so as agreeably to excite the human will to choose that which is right, and refuse that which is wrong—to follow that which is good, and avoid that which is evil; and under such teaching and training, even

infants are capable of knowing and loving God as their heavenly Father, of believing in Christ Jesus as their Saviour, and of praying to, and trusting in, the Holy Spirit as their Sanctifier. From these early efforts to train the mind to think correctly and pleasantly, and the heart to feel properly and agreeably, concerning the truths of Christianity,—and by such methods of intellectual and moral culture, repeated every Sunday, and repeated in every lesson, the little children may have their knowledge habitually pervaded with religion, and their feelings animated by religion, so as to constitute an influence ever present to control their minds and hearts, to guide their lives, and shape their conduct, for their own real benefit, the incalculable advantage of their fellow-beings, and the honour of their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.”\*

A young prince asked his tutor, “ Teach me to pray,—teach me religion.” “ You are too young,” was the answer. “ Am I ? ” inquired the thoughtful child. “ I have been to the burying-ground. I have measured the graves. There are some much shorter than mine would be.” Teacher, if in the churchyard through which you pass there is one short grave—the grave of infancy, be this a lesson to you to instruct little children in religious truth.

5. Without an infant class we hold the *organisation* of a Sunday school to be *incomplete*. The

\* “ Infant Classes in Sunday Schools,” Teachers’ Magazine, vol. ii. p. 395.

school is the centre, the wings should be for the adult and senior—the juvenile and infant classes; separate and distinct in constituency and management, but parts of one whole. Then the chain is complete. It is a place for all; it excludes none. The infant, peeping through the half-open door, may enter in, and the adult is welcomed there. If our work is worth the doing, it is worth the doing well; and, as we before remarked, the philosophy of all training is to begin at the beginning. And again we reiterate, in the language of experience greater than our own, “There may be an infant class in connexion with every school in the land. It ought to be so; and why is it not so? Is it not because we have considered these little ones too young? Some thirty years ago, our churches thought that every one must serve the devil till he was twenty-one, and the consequence was, that few under that age entered the church; and shall we let Satan have the best part of life, with which to take possession of the soul? No, it must not be.”\*

\* Todd.

## CHAPTER III.

## WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE FORMATION OF AN INFANT CLASS.

1. *The Children,—how to get them—their age—their reception—the mixture of grades.*
2. *Separation of Sexes.*
3. *Number in a Class.*
4. *The Class Room,—where and what it should be.*
5. *The Teacher,—whether more than one—male or female—age—qualifications—duties.*
6. *The preparation required.*

1. *How then should such a class be formed?* As to the *children*, how are they to be obtained? No man can work without material, any more than without tools. The materials are to be found. The teacher will serve his own cause by seeking them himself. Parents will generally welcome him. Children, scrutinising his looks, will reflect them back to him. If he looks kind, then, like a polished mirror, they will show kind looks in return. There is no lack of infants; they are ready to our hands. They *have been* turned away; try them now with an invitation, and you will not find it labour in vain. “Tak ‘em as they are, and yur welcome,” said a Yorkshire mother, of some children, poorly clad, “I’ve ower mony o’ ‘em, and hope y’ull do ‘em gud.” “What will you give?” asked an avaricious father, who,

though we bargained not with money, allowed his children to come. "Whisht, it's a Missionary," said a woman, who saw a teacher at the door, about to enter the room in which her Sabbath-breaking neighbours kept her company, "an' he wants t' bairns to go to t' school—*Never!*!" shutting the door against him. But the next Sabbath, she sent the little ones "to be *out of the way*." These, and such as these, are the people the teacher has sometimes to encounter; but if the parents are sometimes rough and obstinate, we generally get the children, and through the child, the way to the parent's heart may often be found.

By *infants*, we mean children of three years of age, and in no case would we admit any above seven, for at this age, untaught and illiterate children present themselves, and they are totally unfit for this class. Mr. Stow says, "If we take the effects of the training system upon a child of nine years of age, who is brought under its influence for the first time as *one*, at six years of age it will be as *four*, and at three years of age as *sixteen*." It is decidedly a harder thing to train a child at five than it is at three, and at seven than at four. The difficulty of mixing even the extremes of these ages is felt, in the want of complete sympathy between such children. In some schools we find them divided into two departments, thus—from three to five, and from five to seven; the younger being called THE BABIES' CLASS. Whatever the

plan be, let the class be strictly an infant class. All children above the age indicated must go to the juvenile school, to which the infant class is attached; as Mr. Watkins says in his admirable report,\* “An infant class must be attached to a juvenile school as a tender to an engine;” and if it is not so, the effort must prove abortive.

Whenever the children come, let the *reception* be a kind one. We invite, they accept the invitation. Our infant class should be as a happy home. The first hour is important; our first actions are judged, before words are comprehended, by the little stranger standing at the desk, waiting to be received.

The infant class should be open to all, neglected children especially, but not solely. Why should we not seek at the threshold of life to bring *grades* together, instead of teaching children, as their first lesson, the humbling distinction between rich and poor? Even where parents are able and willing to educate their own little ones, there are cases in which the collective training of the school is most beneficial. Cleanliness and decency of attire must of course be insisted on, and then the children of the poor being gathered in, bring in also the children of the congregation.

2. *Have them altogether*, not boys and girls apart. Why not preserve the beautiful arrange-

\* “Government Report on Education.”

ment of the family? There is no reason for separation. By it we break the perfect chain of training. The energy of boys, their acute though slower inquiries into truths, should be met by the quicker perceptions and softened feelings of girls. The boisterous spirit of the one will be modified by the natural gentleness of the other, and the chances of good order will be much increased. Speaking of this reciprocal influence, Mrs. Davids remarks, with great force, "In proportion as this mysterious influence is withheld during childhood, *both sexes suffer*; coarseness, impurity, and mutual ill-treatment, mark and deface the character, while a mental sluggishness, never to be subdued in after years, is more or less induced by the absence of so mighty, so beautiful a stimulus as that involuntarily exercised by boys on girls, and girls on boys: and in proportion as they are allowed freely to associate, taught and trained together, is the character refined, elevated, and strengthened."\* In a large and well-ordered school in Northampton, this plan is carried out among the elder children, and the classes are taught indiscriminately by male and female teachers, and the system has, for some years, been attended with great success.

3. The *number* introduced into the class should depend upon the wish of the teacher. Some will readily undertake 150, others can with difficulty

\* "The Sunday School," p. 149.

contemplate any addition to threescore. The class should grow in numbers, and a good teacher, growing in ability at the same time, will easily command the attention and obedience of a hundred children, either alone, or aided by a junior in course of training. But let him *feel* his way. A practised teacher will soon find the vast power there is in the sympathy of numbers. One of ten, a child is not sensible of this influence as it would if it were one of a hundred. In the latter case, it sees many others feeling and acting, and the strong propensity of its little nature is to do the same. Mr. Curwen calls it the love of "togetherness," and we know no better name.

4. *Where are they to be taught?* By all means in a *separate* place, and, if possible, in a separate room. Let our ingenuity contrive the plan. Classes are to be found in different parts of the country, with very diversified accommodation. Sometimes they are held in the chapel gallery, (pews are awkward places, but they are better than nothing,) or in the minister's vestry, or in some neighbour's house, or in a rented upper room. We have seen the little ones, in the summer time, grouped around their teacher under the shadow of a wide-spread tree;—in a boat, hauled up upon the beach, by a village on the Northern coast;—in the country Squire's kitchen; and in the stable loft; and one may now be found by going up the steep winding stair of well-worn steps, almost to the top of the

ancient tower, from which the bells of Christ-church ring out their merry peal.

“Necessity is the mother of invention.” The best place is one made for the purpose; but a green curtain thrown across a corner of the school-room will do. An unoccupied week-day school-room (of which, alas, too many are to be found), and better still, an infant school-room, already fitted with gallery and boards, and other apparatus. There is a great charm to the children in “*our own* room,” and by affording it, the church only does its duty to the experiment, and to the teacher. Still, let no one abandon the plan because an infant class-room cannot be *erected*. Earn the aid of friends by your unassisted efforts, and it will be doubly valuable when it comes, nor will it be long ere it is proffered.

Let the place be where you can secure *light and air*. It is of the utmost moment both for teacher and taught. Not less important is it that your place be *cheerful*. The hours of childhood are “golden and bright.” Let those spent in the infant class be such. Let the eye be pleased. Childhood is in a measure free from anxiety, care, and sorrow. Let us not cast a shadow over it. The cheerfulness of the room adds much to the lightness of the heart; and school, to be a profitable place, must be a pleasant one. Knock out the brick; put in the ventilator; set traps to catch the sunshine.

5. WHO IS TO TEACH? This is *the* question, too often *the* difficulty, and one not easy of solution. The brief compass proposed for this paper makes it requisite that we should restrict our remarks to practical points, and first,—

In the Sunday school it is an undoubted fact, that the great body of our teachers, comprising a large proportion of the best of them, belong to the humbler classes of society. To their praise be it spoken, thousands of church members, who toil hard six days in the week, teach twice on the Sabbath, and twice attend the house of God. They have the great qualification, but we should desire to see the teaching power of our schools of a higher and more cultivated character. The infant class requires it, and for want of such prepared persons, many of them droop and fall to decay. The question, therefore, is of the utmost importance.

Is *more than one* teacher required? The management of the class must rest in one person—that person, the teacher. There may be assistants in course of training, but we deprecate the employment of monitors. They seldom help, and often embarrass. It is bad for themselves. They are far better in the senior class than distracting, by interference, the attention of children, and irritating, by a petty domineering authority. A good teacher *needs* no one to help, but if he prefer it, let it be a pupil teacher. With the room to himself he can deal more closely, and speak more freely with his

children, who in their turn will concentrate their undivided attention upon him.

For such a mixed class should there be a *male or a female teacher?* Woman is without doubt pre-eminently fitted for the work which nature calls "her own." In the family, the mother's influence and training are supreme, during the period of infancy, and an active teacher can perform all the routine duties of the class without allowing the cessation of employment. In fact, it is well that the teacher should accustom herself to move about among the children, rather than maintain the dignity of the rostrum, and so gain the valuable power of preserving order, even when the eye is removed. In Sunday schools, also, the female teachers are found in larger numbers, and are more constant in attendance than those of the other sex. Raikes's first teachers were women. The first Sunday school in America was commenced by ladies; and some of our best infant-school teachers, now, are females. They naturally possess high qualifications. With them tenderness dwells, and placidity, and patience—sterling virtues. Their characters, habits, and feelings, are wonderfully adapted to childhood's wants and capacities. And yet there are qualifications to which we shall have occasion to advert, which, we think, the mind of manhood alone possesses, except in some remarkable and exceptional cases. One of these is the power of controlling numbers. Far be it from us

to balance the diversity of gifts. What is most needed is piety, aptitude, and physical strength, with love, firmness, and decision. Mr. Stow and Mrs. Davids respectively assume the teacher to be of their own sex, without discussing the question ; while Mrs. Davids allows that for the "little boy class" a "female teacher rarely has sufficient bodily strength and energy to command them."

It has been remarked that "there is a tendency in females to address the feelings and the heart, more than the reason, and to urge and persuade, rather than prove and convince ; and that, with their gentleness of character, they do not suffer themselves to realise the dreadful condition of unconverted children, and steel their minds to the painful duty of plain speaking." Such facts and warnings, however, may, and ought to be communicated fully, though in tender accents, to the little child. The want of *physical* energy appears to us to be the great drawback to female agency in this department. It is a service of unremitting fatigue and toil. A female writer remarks, "Efforts, which to one in robust health are like dew-drops shaken from an eagle's wings, seem to others like the ascent of the Alps, or like heaping Pelion upon Ossa." "The spirit is" often "willing," when "the flesh is weak." Then, in proportion to the age of the children, if disobedient, they are more difficult to rule, often too much so for female discipline. Babies, we should naturally yield to female care ;

elder children we should place, guided very much by age, under the care of a man. But in the infant class we have a mixed company, and the balance in our minds lies so even, that the question of physical ability would turn it. The great danger is one against which we warn the promoters of infant classes, viz.—that of coming too early to a decision on this point. Let the class be *formed*, and then take the most suitable person of either sex, whose heart is willing for the work, or better still, who has been trained for it. Many a class has been abandoned because decision on this point at the outset has limited the selection.

The *age* of the teacher is another consideration. We want experience, but this may be found coupled with youthfulness ; we do not mean mere youth, but its maturity. We agree to the full with an able writer in one of our periodicals, who says, “Looking at the great end in view, it becomes questionable, whether a very young person is best adapted to take the charge of an infant class ; a higher degree of social development is required than is usually possessed by persons before the age of manhood. It is in such a field as this that youth—crude, unripe, inexperienced youth—is, under present arrangement, usually employed, while manhood stands by and criticises the failure.” An active mind and sprightly manner are all-important ; and while grey hairs are ever a crown of glory, sympathy lies closer between the hearts of infancy and

youth, than between infancy and age. But all other things being equal, this is not a weighty consideration.

The teacher of the infant class must be, not only a good teacher, *but the best that can be had*. No pains or trouble must be spared to secure this. It is a vital question. We never yet knew the plan to fail but from an error of choice here. It is the key-stone to the arch. The common practice is the very reverse, and, owing to it, individual teaching is persisted in, and children are *dragged up* into knowledge. “Any one will do for the little ones.” Never was there a more profound mistake. There are but few who are at once prepared for the responsible post, but there are very many who, with a little self-training, would be exactly fitted. Many think the infant class an inferior post, and to them the excellent author of the “Teacher’s Companion” addresses himself, when he says, “If, therefore, you have the charge of the infant class, do not imagine that you occupy an inferior, and consequently a less responsible, station in the school; the task demanded of you may be more tedious and self-denying than the duties required from the teacher of a Scripture class, but your post is neither inferior nor uninteresting. The importance of your station does not arise from the ages of your scholars, but from the power which you can exert upon their untutored minds.”

It has been well said by an experienced instructor,

“ Give me such boys (as scholars) as have been blessed with the instruction of pious mothers. Truths thus instilled are interwoven with the fibres of the soul ; ” and we may say with equal emphasis, Give us *for teachers* such young men and women as have in early years been trained by holy mothers, and, in the recollection and sympathies of former days, they will find pleasure and success in teaching little children, as they were taught themselves. How often do we hear the half-despairing cry, “ Where shall we find a teacher ? Children, place, apparatus, everything we have but the great thing, the prime mover. The machinery stands ready ; who will touch the spring ? ” The difficulty might soon be overcome. It is one which has been felt wherever the system has been proposed, and hundreds of classes are now possessed of teachers, many of whom were the first to exclaim, “ Who is sufficient for these things ? ” and many of whom no one ever dreamed of asking. We have a case in point in our recollection, one that can never be forgotten, and it will serve to some extent as an illustration of the qualifications necessary.

A school meeting was held in a certain country village, for the purpose of discussing the point, “ Whether an infant class shall be formed ? ” The minister and teachers took up the question with spirit,—all admitted its importance,—difficulties were started,—but one by one they were all set at rest, save and except this—“ Who is to be the

teacher?" Over and over the question was put. One name after another was suggested, but "all with one consent began to make excuse." The failure of the plan seemed imminent, and the discussion was on the point of being postponed, *sine die*, when up rose a man in one corner of the chapel, who, unobserved, had been sitting, musing, till the "fire burned." His words were few, but earnest. "Sooner than them little ones sha'n't have no teacher, Sir, I'll try it." All eyes were turned upon the volunteer. He was a tall, dark visaged, ill-conditioned looking man, and people stood amazed as they recognised in him the village blacksmith. Of all men he seemed the least likely to attract children. His voice was harsh, and his countenance and manner rough, and almost unpleasing. No one could believe it possible that he was in earnest. But he was, and though the smile went round, and the sceptical whispered their doubts, that man went home resolved—*to try*. He did try, and for months, while every one supposed the work abandoned, this teacher was training. He felt his difficulties. He had to learn a new language. He borrowed of a lady some children's books, and, taking Mrs. Hooker's "Bible Stories," he set himself to work. He read and thought;—shutting the book, he tried to write the stories out in his own words. Early and late he toiled at these appointed tasks. Often he failed, but at last, like Bruce's spider, he succeeded. He

had learnt the secret. He had acquired simplicity of thought and expression. He had brought down his mind to the level of a little child's mind.

It was now time to begin. He was a wise man. Not parading his triumph, but humbly watching his opportunity, he made his first attempt. In the dusky afternoon of a November day, some little ones stood at his smithy door, watching the bright sparks shooting out from the glowing embers of the blacksmith's forge, as they were now being quickened into a blazing fire. These children had often wandered there before, to feast their eyes on this wondrous scene, and to listen to the roar of the mighty bellows ; but sometimes the man had spoken roughly to them, and even now, as they looked, they seemed undecided as to whether they dared to stay. But this time, the blacksmith's face, seen by the reflection of the fitful flame, wore a different aspect ; and, as he turned his eyes on them, the children felt more confidence. Edging nearer to the door, they gathered courage, and gradually ventured in. The smith spoke. His very voice, no longer gruff and harsh, was kind and pleasant, and now he spoke *to* them, not *at* them, as before. They listened as he talked. His heart was encouraged, and their little hearts warmed with strange liking to the altered man. He drew the heated bar from the fire, and laying it on the anvil, the swarthy blacksmith made it the subject of his first lesson to his new infant class, and the first school-room was the village forge.

That man has now one of the best infant classes in England, and a hundred little ones rejoice to call him friend and teacher.

What were his qualifications? He was *pious*. Piety is *essential*. Do not let us deceive ourselves on this head. It is a question with some, whether unconverted teachers may not be employed with advantage to themselves, and profit to the school. We do not enter into the discussion here. All we have to say is, place them where you will, if you resolve to admit them, but *not* in the infant class. We hold, with the good Richard Baxter, that "it is awful to see dead preachers speaking to dead hearers, the living truths of the living God." It is a solemn question. We may not trifle with it; we peril the eternal interests of little children if we do. "Unsanctified agency in the propagation of Divine truth has, in all ages, been the calamity and bane of the church of God."\* The point has been fully set forth in Scripture, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied;" and again, "Unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee."

Some teachers may be converted in the discharge of their work, but we have no right to risk the soul of a child for the sake of a teacher. There may be

\* Dr. Campbell.

a benevolent interest, and other amiable qualities, but their religion is not a thing of the heart ; it is a rude abstract idea, and, as such, the primary qualification is wanting. We might as well urge that unconverted men should be put in the pulpit, in the hope that while they were preaching to others, their work might be a blessing to themselves. No ; the teachers of infants must have learned Christ, to teach Christ—must have found the heavenly way themselves, to enable them to be as shining lights in the dark places, guiding the feet of little wanderers in the paths of peace. They must have *tasted* of the good things which they have to handle, and dispense to others, and their hearts must burn with desire to win souls. The alphabet and spelling book, indeed, may be taught by an irreligious person, though we would rather not entrust *any* branch of education to such ; but when the Bible is the lesson book, and the salvation of souls the object, the teacher must have clear perceptions of the way of salvation, and be able to say, “*Come with me,*” rather than, “ That is the way ;” or, to use the well-known illustration, the teacher must not be like the sign-post, ever pointing to the inquiring traveller, but never advancing to the place to which it points. The practice of the teacher must accord with his motto, “ Come, ye children, hearken unto me ; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

The village blacksmith had not a high degree of *intellectual attainment*,—it would have been well if

he had ; but he was endowed with fine moral qualifications, and his motives were exalted and pure. His furniture was scanty, indeed, to begin with, but he spends a happy life in making daily acquisitions, cultivating his intellect by the exercise of its powers.

He had a natural *love for children*. It scarcely showed itself through his rough exterior, but it was in the heart all the while, and, when called upon, its ready voice responded. “I love God and every little child,” was the simple yet sublime sentiment of Richter, and Lavater leaves a warning to us to “beware of him who hates the laugh of a child.” The feelings implanted in our very nature prompt to the love of children, and God teaches it,—“Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

What is required is more than mere benevolence ; it must be an *enthusiastic* affection, warming the heart to energy and untiring effort, and bearing it through countless difficulties. “’Tis ours to feed the lambs—blessed occupation.” They come to us from the mother’s home ; it may be the abode of love, or it may be the home of sorrow and contention. Our love will be as the maternal tenderness to those who know its hallowed influences, and the sunshine of their life to those who live amidst clouds and darkness.

He had a *good temper* ; he was *patient*. Infancy must be treated with more than ordinary tenderness. The education we give is meant to have a powerful influence over temper. If we speak im-

patiently, or are *put out*—if our conduct is subject to variations—if under provocation we lose our self-control,—we shall find the same tendencies in our children. We educate corresponding passions to our own. Infant intellect may be feeble, but infantile capacity is keen enough to detect inconsistency, and imitate example. It is said of a Friend, who was naturally quick and passionate, that he cured himself entirely by speaking in a low tone, commanding tone and temper at the same time. Let us seek *equanimity*, ever remembering Locke's maxim, that “Whenever trepidation is produced in a child, and his thoughts have received disturbance from without, no further instruction can do good.” It is as impossible to draw fair and regular characters on a trembling mind, as on a shaking paper.

He had *talent for teaching*. Long hidden, but only *hidden*; just as the removed grass-plat at Hampton Court disclosed but yesterday to the astonished beholder the seeds of a past century, now greeting the light of heaven, and bursting from their long imprisonment, to gladden the regal parterre with beauty. The teacher of infants must have this talent. We all know what it is. Some call it tact, others art, or knack, as best pleases them. This talent,—is it a gift, or an acquirement? People wish they had the power: did they ever try to find it? Have they ever studied the art of teaching? Did they ever feel the value of a pains-

taking effort to acquire it? Have they ever done as the blacksmith did? Let them *learn* to teach as he did, and they will soon find the talent, and we all know that the most practised are usually the most skilful. How many a mind is marred in the moulding, by unskilful hands.

He had *perseverance*. By hours of toil he prepared, through years of work he persevered, and does so still. So must we act. Faith in the work is essential; without it, we have no heart to battle on, amidst difficulties and gloomy forebodings, which often shut out from view the bright harbingers of success. It is God's work, not ours. *We* may fail, but *it* must succeed. If we trust Him, and believe in the appointed way, we do our duty. The fruit may not appear, but the seed is sown. Too often like the little girl, who dropped in her precious seeds over night, and wept that the morning sun shone not upon the golden flowers, we look for the fruit ere the leaves have begun to sprout. Wait God's time. Spring, coming, meets the sower; autumn sends the reaper forth. Others may gather, but the promise shall be fulfilled: so let us

“Learn to labour, and to wait.”

These qualifications, then, are essential to the right discharge of the office of Teacher. The *duties* themselves are as follows:—*to implant, to train, and to exercise*. The physical, the intellectual, and the moral natures are to be alike under his con-

trol. His work is to train the whole being for eternity. He must seek a thorough knowledge of each child, in person and mind, and upon this intimate knowledge of individual character ground his guiding principle of action. He must prepare with care, and present with discretion, food suitable to the capacity of infancy.

We shall have to dwell upon these points at some length, in considering the practical details of the teacher's work ; and standing first in order is the question,

6. *How to prepare.* None can be independent of this claim. To some, it involves hard and laborious study, first how to *fit* the mind for teaching, and then how to *furnish* it. Some readily take hold of truth, and fashion it out with a facility which is really wonderful ; others require careful self-training. Isocrates caused to be written, in golden letters, over the entry of his school, this golden sentence, in Greek, “ If thou love learning, thou shalt attain to much learning.”

There is no better place for such earnest, practical learning, than the week-day Infant School. Go there, and take your lesson. Get hold of the philosophy and spirit of the system. Study your own mind and character. Cultivate your own heart. Commune with it. “ The retiring of the mind into itself,” said a man of wisdom, “ is the state most susceptible of Divine impressions.” See that the “ fire is in the furnace.” Realize in your-

self the truth of Lord Byron's infidel sneer, when he said of religionists, "These people are fired with the heroic passion." So strive to catch the high tone and spirit of your work, and become, as the teacher of infants should be, an enthusiast.

*Study the art of teaching.* Few do this, though they love the practice. Some do without it, and they think they succeed. But they do best who make it a study, as men of genius or science do with their pursuits. There is a mystery, which can only be cleared up by thinking deeply, and searching after principles. This exercise will teach them that simplicity is not poverty of expression,—that adaptation lies not in the perfection of plan, but in the fitness of the teacher. They will know how to carry thoughts *into* a child's mind; not leaving them, as so many do, at the doorway. They will learn not to sow the seed, without, at the same time, giving great care to the process by which it must be incorporated with the mould, remembering the adage, "To overload a field with seed, is but to feed the fowls." They will learn what is most suitable to children's tastes and comprehensions, and where to get the material with which to prepare the food. And this is a most important matter for consideration, for a large number of our teachers, so far as we can judge, have very little idea of the amount of furniture necessary for the fulfilment of their work.

The following books are recommended by various

teachers: "*Stow's Training System*," "*Lessons on Scripture Prints*," "*Sermons for the Infant's Class*," "*Model Lessons for Infant School Teachers*," "*Glasgow Infant Magazine*," "*Infant Education*;" and we could add many others equally well known.

Prepare *daily and everywhere*. The best lessons may be obtained thus. A rich store of treasure lies before us and around. If we observe, consider, and classify, we shall be able to select and employ. Facts of recent occurrence, and things we ourselves have seen, and can describe, form the most interesting and vivid pictures to a little child. They are the best pegs upon which to hang our moral lessons, and the best subjects from which to draw our pointed appeals. Let the works of nature be studied more, and books of mere amusement less. Let the eye rest, as we pass through the streets, upon striking objects. Children at play,—acts of benevolence,—virtuous deeds,—the blind beggar's dog,—the captured thief,—the falling leaf, and a hundred other things, carefully noted at the time, may be brought into use, at no cost to ourselves, but delighting our little charge with ever fresh and varied illustrations, best suited to our requirements.

For this purpose, we should say to the teacher, put yourself in the way of seeing objects of special interest. Go to the court of justice, and to the prison,—to the convict ship, and the emigrant vessel; the workhouse,—the infirmary,—and the

ragged school; visit the glass blower's,—the printer's,—the paper maker's,—and the pottery.\* Seek to understand early science, and its wonderful adaptations; examine the steam engine, and the electric telegraph; and so gather your materials; wisely careful, nevertheless, to select so as not to present too many new objects in succession. So shall you be enabled to gain, and keep the riveted attention of your class of little ones, ignorant and young though they may seem; and thus, the curiosity aroused, the exertions quickened, and the heart opened, you shall, with ready skill, seize the golden opportunity to drop in the good and fruitful seed. In all this we must remember that the acquisition of knowledge is of little worth, without the power of retention, by the cultivation of the memory, and without facility in calling it forth at will, and producing it, for the purpose of communication.

*How to communicate.* There is but one way, but it is no royal road.. It is an axiom, that no lesson is given until it is received. This is the great object of all teaching, to carry right into the minds of our pupils the seed we desire to implant there. "Knowledge," says Lord Bacon, "is an

\* The wonders of the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations were not developed when this paper was written; but what teacher could traverse those splendid compartments, rich with the precious things of earth, without filling a note-book with valuable illustrations.

impression of pleasure ;" and if we wish to win a way for it, we must let it be in an agreeable form. Our thoughts, even *religious* ones, must not be clothed in mourning. Our Saviour did not teach thus. He dressed truth in living illustration, and parable ; and children must have it, not as the shadowy theory, but in the substance of fact, something that they can take hold of. The vine,—the fig-tree,—the sower,—the steward,—the prodigal,—the leaven,—national customs, and occupations, all afforded illustrations to the Great Teacher, and in them he wrapped up, as it were, his own precious truths. His way is best. He showed Christianity to be a spirit, subduing, by possessing the will, and educating, by inducing and fostering the sweet sympathies of religious love. Thus should it be taught to the child, with such earnestness and gentleness, and in so skilful and judicious a manner, that he should love to learn. The matter may be very good, and yet the manner of presenting it defective. Whitfield's most successful sermons show how much more they depended upon manner than matter. "There are many manuals," says a recent writer, "to lead the infant mind from nature up to nature's God ; but teachers rather need manuals to teach them how to treat their children." It must be in the spirit and in the dialect of love ; souls are not fashioned by geometric rules ; religious teaching must be the expression of the mind of love, inspiring by example.

*Liveliness and vivacity* are almost essentials in the mode of teaching. “Childhood’s birthright is its *innocent joy*, and no restraint should forfeit its beautiful heritage of young delight. The joyous freshness of their young natures should be preserved, while they learn the duties that fit them for this life and the next. Wipe away their tears. Cherish their smiles. Let them learn to draw happiness from all surrounding objects.”

Childhood requires liveliness. Without it, stolid indifference and sleepy weariness overcome the little creatures;—with it, the very appearance of the child is brightened. An open and sprightly countenance, with intellectual vigour and enjoyment, is the sure result of a lively manner, connected with skilful adaptation. All this, however, must be *natural*. Feeling cannot be put on successfully, any more than earnestness can be assumed, and all must be at a distant remove from anything like levity.

“He that negotiates between God and man,  
As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns  
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware  
Of lightness in his speech. ’Tis pitiful  
To court a grin, where you should woo a soul;  
And to address the skittish fancy with facetious tales,  
When sent with God’s commission to the heart.”\*

Liveliness is not levity. Children see through that quickly; they read the countenance, and deci-

\* Cowper.

pher the charm of a cheerful spirit. While, therefore, we seek to avoid a severe or austere manner, let us not put on constrained smiles and gestures. A deaf and dumb child selected from among many sisters, one who had golden locks, and a beaming, radiant countenance. He used to say to her, "My heart is warm when I look at you."

Thus, as the chief aim of teaching is to instil the love of what is good and pleasant, so such love and pleasantness should be the prominent feature in the characters with which children come in contact. Let us, therefore, ever be as the apostle Paul, and his associates, who said, "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." We need not say that the very lineaments of cheerfulness are important,—the pleasant voice and the bright brow, the "very tread" having "life and gladness in it;" remembering the words of the poet Coleridge:

"O'er wayward childhood wouldest thou hold firm rule,  
And sun thee in the light of happy faces?  
Love, hope, and patience, these must be thy graces,  
And in thine own heart let them first keep school."

*Be simple.* This is the highest attainment of the teacher of infants. Simplicity has no fixed character; its secret lies in its co-existence with adaptation. It does not mean foolishness, any more than shallowness. A barren mind cannot afford to be simple, the poverty would be discovered; but while we avoid what they cannot understand, let us

lead our children to comprehend difficult things with pleasure, like blind Euler, the mathematician, who made even algebra attractive to children. They dislike mystery, and their infantile perceptions require aiding to the acquisition of knowledge. The way to bring them up to our standard of excellence is, to go down and fetch them. We are on the mound in the centre of the labyrinth ; they are at the very entrance, with many turnings around them on every side. They seek the right one. We must not beckon them to us, but joining them, take them by the hand, and lead them with us, step by step together.

Nor must we object to *their* simplicity. Our object is to preserve them from evil, not from childishness. We must become one with them in feeling and action, revert to the language and thoughts of childhood, try to hear and see, and think with them as they are, and take the children themselves as our standard. Great truths may be illustrated by small words ; acting on this principle, give them a Bible lesson, and ask for it back again. Mark the points they remember, and the words they use, and so see where you have overshot your mark, and what are their own ways of expressing what they have understood. You will probably find that *your figure* may not be comprehended by those who could have followed the illustration of the Saviour, “Even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.” Mrs. H. More says, “Speaking so as

not to be understood, and writing so as not to be read, are among the minor immoralities." Read children's books, learn their language, get hold of their phrases, for they are pass-words which will be invaluable in gaining you an entrance into their hearts. Let the children not only talk to you, but listen to them as they converse with others. Their conversation is rich in this charm. Two little ones, ere they fall asleep, talk together. Listen to the story, watch the power of thought, and the flow of words. See how everything is simplified. What lessons may we thus learn of the wonders of that adaptation and simplicity which unlocks the heart so quietly, and, seeming to have nothing, possessth all things!

*Variety* is essential. The natural restlessness and impatience of infancy, when we attempt to fix it for a long time on one train of feeling, are proofs of the necessity of varied action and employment. The development of the faculties of both mind and body are gradual. The child observes long before it compares, and compares before it reasons. We appeal to a child's reason, and it is a difficult process. It should not be urged too far.

Madame Necker says, "Never let a child be weary; *ennui* is the lethargy of the soul." To walk too long on any road is wearisome; but of all roads, the level and straight one induces weariness soonest. Where all is set, smooth, and mechanical, the spirit soon flags. "Children are

not formed for monotony and fixedness; their nervous systems will not bear it with impunity, and even their very bones are intolerant of the erect position for any length of time.”\* Short exercises, and diversified, keep up the attention. This is one of the great secrets of infant training, physical, mental, and moral. Variety is not inconsistent or incompatible with *system*. It should be in unison with it. How are we to secure this variety? Fortunately, the act of communication provides for the thing it requires, as we shall see in considering the various methods of teaching.

The *pictorial* principle—one of the main features of the infant day school system—is deservedly one of the most popular, and happily the infant Sabbath class need not repudiate it. Its lesson book, the Bible, is full of pictures. Children love to look at pictures, and they can do it in two ways. The way denoted here is what is termed  *picturing out*, or presenting a picture to the mind of a child through the medium of the human voice. Such a representation, carefully made, serves to fix impression better than if it were in colours, or on canvas. Pestalozzi introduced the use of pictures and objects. His instruction was limited, of course, to the things represented, whereas the picturing out in words is most expansive. It is an art to be diligently cultivated. Hearing is pleasanter to children than read-

\* Dr. Moore.

ing, and at this, the earlier age, of course reading is out of the question.

The principle is, "the picturing out of every term, and every subject, in words representing objects;”\* and it must be borne in mind, that every word in the English language either represents an object, or the combination of objects, or may be pictured out in words representing objects. Illustrations of the value of this principle need not be given—they are abundant. Care must be taken to present a bold and clear outline. The filling up is a secondary matter. It will be done progressively, just as the child fits in the parts of its puzzle map,—first the sea-coast, and then the inland counties. The children must draw the picture *with* the teacher, and make it their own, understanding it as they go on. There must be as much of vividness of conception and truthfulness of delineation as possible. By masterly touches, every point must be brought out. Completeness and finish are essential. Minuteness on our part will insure accuracy. Children love detail. Every such representation should have its lesson or point. Let nothing lead to the sacrifice of this appeal. We are to seek to profit through pleasing, but not to gratify at the expense of profiting.

Illustrations should be used plentifully. Here the daily preparation comes in. We gather them

\* Stow.

easily on every hand, when we make it our business, and in the common walks of every-day life; and these, well selected, can be thrown in with great effect, in an apt and lively manner. Let there be no seeming effort, no bungling in the fitting, no forcing in the application. We do not plead for the marvellous, but the ordinary; neither farfetched, nor extravagant, coarse or foolish, but *suited* for the purpose. Children are not fond of mere stories strung together, nor do they like teachers who, unprepared with better food, bring nothing but anecdotes to the repast. These may excite curiosity and fancy at first, but lose their power, and soon cloy the taste when over-done. A good anecdote is a good thing, but should only be used when wanted, in the way of illustration.

The *individual method* of teaching has, we trust, had its day. It is a most extravagant plan, wasting time, means, and power; doing and undoing at the same time. How is it that, in so many schools, this exploded practice, abandoned by most thinking men, is still retained? It must go. It might do for the age of alphabets and primers, when children were called up one by one to read, and, counting forward the verses, waited with ill-concealed indifference till their turn came round again; but now all are engaged at once, and upon the same subject.

This *collective* method is invaluable. Frugality of time and influence is obtained, and the whole

class is engaged with the teacher during the whole time. Their attention is directed to the same point, and their united energies bent upon its elucidation. Questioning is, of course, introduced, and much of the instruction is of a didactic character. Where the question was put to a particular child, it is now addressed to all, and infants love the "togetherness" of instruction, and the active *doing* connected with it. The Notes of the Sunday School Union are prepared for this system, and are admirably adapted to it. Great interest attaches to this method, and its value is felt by both teacher and taught.

The *simultaneous* system is pre-eminently fitted for the infant class. Oneness can be better obtained by it than any other method. It presents a domestic character, and a sociability, which children love intensely. The whole class is instructed at the same time, and the children answer altogether, as with one voice. The system has been termed "uproarious." If so, it is the abuse of it. There may be noise, but it is orderly noise, very different from the disorderly idleness of the individual system. The irregular shuffle of a score of ploughboys makes more confusion than the firm and even tread of the military column.

We entirely demur to the assertion, that it is "a system which may please all, but impresses none." No one would act on the simultaneous, any more than the interrogatory system, *all* the

time. In the infant class, the teacher uses all these methods in their place, and thus secures the variety for which we have contended. The advantage of the simultaneous system lies in this,—that the power of imitation and sympathy is so strong in infancy, that some children will do together what they would fear to attempt alone, and thus in singing, reading, repeating, and answering, the benefit is apparent.

The *interrogatory* and *elliptical* methods should be united. Stow says, “The question sets the mind astir; the ellipsis directs what is set moving.” Neither will do well alone. Questioning is most important, but it requires great discretion. Our questions must be such as will incite to mental activity, but not such as will over-task the mind. The elliptical is a very favourite method, and should be much esteemed with young children. It constrains thought, and often demands the searching after hidden treasure. To miss the word gives the child occupation in watching, selecting, and putting it in. We drop a link, he picks it up, and so a complete narrative may be presented by the teacher taking the whole class along with him, in evident delight.

We might also refer to the *analytic*, or “taking to pieces” method—the *synthetic*, or “putting together” the parts of a subject, and the *deductive*, which must conclude all such exercises, to make them practical. Thus may each be duly used, at

the discretion of the teacher. They are tools which he may employ in his garden at pleasure; sometimes the spade, at others the hoe, but all have their useful properties.

There is yet another method by which we teach, and that perhaps more powerful than any other. We refer to *example*. "*Maxima debetur puero reverentia*," is a saying as trite as it is true, and the conduct of the infant class teacher must be governed by this principle. It is a great mistake to suppose that we may do anything in the presence of little children. Our example is all-powerful. They judge from trifles, and we are the objects of their scrutiny. Every eye watches, every look records. Example speaks louder than words. Teaching, without practising, is worse than doing nothing; but the argument of the life is irresistible.

## CHAPTER IV.

## HOW TO CONDUCT THE CLASS.

1. *What to teach—not Reading as an art, but Religion in its practice.* 2. *What Bible training is.* 3. *Conversion the aim of the Teacher.* 4. *Cultivation of the heart.* 5. *The formation of good habits—obedience—truthfulness—justice—benevolence—forgiveness—attention.* 6. *General Principles—value of system—regularity—circumspection.* 7. *The study of mind.* 8. *The thing to aim at.* 9. *Teach neither too much, nor too long.*

1. THE primary question is, *what are we to teach?*

Let us answer this by first considering what we are not to teach.

*Reading* is not within our province. It belongs to the secular school. It is a mechanical, technical exercise. This doctrine may be called “stern morality,” but, while we admit reading to be a good thing, and that it would not be *wrong* to teach it on the Sunday, we still maintain that children ought to learn during the week, and, happily, they can. Ours are Sabbath hours, and our argument is, that they are too few, and too precious, to be relinquished for such a purpose. Much may be learnt indirectly in the way of reading well, by the use of the letter-box, but even that should not

be employed to teach letters, or syllables, or words, as such. A practical writer says, "He [the teacher] cannot proceed well without an habitual and due regard to the mode in which young children naturally acquire knowledge. Most children who occupy an infant class are not only illiterate, but ignorant. Their language, composed of phrases instead of sentences, evinces that their minds are occupied with notions, in place of ideas. The mode by which children of tender years acquire language, is an obvious proof that they are creatures of imitation. An infant learns to speak by imitating sounds."

Children will remember words when they see them again, under this "look and say system" of training, which connects ideas with them. The letter and syllable mean nothing to them, but the word is a picture, and is understood. A correspondent of one of our magazines says, "I only have recourse to this [spelling] exercise to while away time." One cannot help regretting, that in such a school other duties are so tedious and wearying, that spelling becomes so recreating an exercise. Such teachers as this, fond of crutches, supply themselves with an abundance of works, professing to aid in religious instruction, and children go home, singing, to the tune of "*Adeste Fideles*," or "*Portugal New*," the following Scripture alphabet:—

A is an Angel, who praises the Lord ;  
B is for Bible, God's holy word ;

C is for Church, where the righteous resort ;  
D is for Devil, who wishes our hurt ;

and so on, concluding—

U is for Uzzah, who died for his sin ;  
V is for Vashti, the hard-fated queen ;  
W's for Whale, to Jonah a dread ;  
X is for Cross, upon which Jesus bled ;  
Y is for Yoke, 'tis the badge of a slave ;  
Z's for Zaccheus, whom Jesus did save.

When a little advanced in the power of articulating these hard and unmeaning words, children of three years old are taught the following :—

G is for Goshen, a rich and good land ;  
H is for Horeb, where Moses did stand ;  
I is Italy, where Rome stands so fair ;  
J is for Joppa, and Peter lodged there ;  
K is for Kadesh, where Miriam died ;  
L is for Lebanon, can't be denied. \*

Mere word teaching, and education, are not synonymous ; for education requires not the teaching of words so much as *ideas*, or consecutive thoughts. Words are utterly barren, and mere reading, without reflection, is a dangerous thing. Dugald Stewart says, “ Nothing has such a tendency to weaken the powers of invention and intellect.” It is an attainment fathers and mothers like children to acquire, but often sacrifice much to obtain. What is the use of repeating words which the understanding cannot comprehend ? It is the mere recollection

\* “ Infant Teachers’ Assistant.”

of certain sounds. We want what the Germans call *thing knowledge*. Let our children recollect thoughts, instead of sounds, or both together, as is natural they should. All ideas should be connected with facts; mere abstract forms of catechetical exercise, therefore, are not suitable for little children to learn. The memory may retain the answers, but ideas and facts wanting, the understanding is clouded, and the heart closed. We shall never reach a child's mind by mere lessons, or produce conviction there by forcing words upon his memory. If we attempt to do so, we transgress all the laws of nature and experience.

*What, then, are we to teach?* We answer, unhesitatingly, RELIGION. "A religious and moral education is the first want of a people."\* Religion is the foundation of all true education, and we desire to lay a good foundation. Be sure you understand in what religion consists. Mrs. Sigourney says of children, "Their religion should be eminently that of the heart, a love of their Father in heaven, a love of all that he has made, an obedience to all his commands, a dread of his displeasure, a continual reference to him for aid, renovation, and forgiveness through the Saviour, and a consciousness that every deed, however secret, is open to his eye,—every word, every motive, to be brought into judgment. This foundation will bear a broad superstructure, when years expand the lineaments of character, and

\* Victor Cousin.

time's trials teach self-knowledge, humility, and reliance on omnipotent strength."

Let us be as wise master builders. Let us fix the first principles of God's truth in the mind, as the massive stones upon which the edifice shall stand, and so secure a safe and permanent basis. We are dealing with that which is immortal, so let religion give to our efforts a noble tendency and a divine bias. And as this is a sentiment much objected to by some, who claim that children should choose for themselves, let us remember the severe reproof of Coleridge, who showed one of these wise ones his garden, full of weeds, saying, "I am leaving it without bias, and letting it choose for itself."

On the subject of teaching the true character of God, Mr. Todd makes the following valuable remarks :—

"Some try to escape it in one way, and some in another; but all meet it. Some deny it in words, but acknowledge it in practice; for they are forced to draw the character of God widely different from that drawn in the Bible. They hold him up dressed in robes of mercy and love, indifferent to the violations of law, winking at sin,—a representation of God about as correct as a beautiful picture of the ocean sleeping in the silvery light of the moon, is a true and faithful representation of that awful bed of waters. Others do not, and dare not, bring the true character of God before the mind of the child, but, instead of it, they give beautiful illustrations of this and that duty. What need of this? Why is the character of God an object of aversion to every unrenewed heart, whether in a child or in the full-grown man? I answer, that when the mind

fully sees the greatness of God, it receives the full impression of his awful and holy nature,—of his unchangeableness,—of his power and right to govern and command us,—of our consciousness that we have sinned, and are daily sinning against him ;—and the soul is at once open to fear and forebodings. Tell the child that God is almighty and can protect him, and he knows too that this almighty may be used to crush him,—and he is afraid. Tell him that God sees him and knows all things, and therefore will for ever shield him from injustice, and he knows that this very knowledge has counted up his sins, and will bring everything into judgment. Tell him to rejoice, for ‘the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,’ and he cannot do it,—for he knows that his government extends over *him*, and will to eternity bind him to obedience.

“Now what shall be done? Shall we avoid leading the child to contemplate the character of God, because it is unpleasant to him? By no means. Take every possible method to make the child understand the whole and the true character of God ;—his eternity is time and years continued for ever ; his skill is seen in the painting of the rainbow, and in every limb of the child ; his power is seen in all creation,—the flood, the mountain, the ocean, the wind ; his holiness is seen in the Red Sea becoming the grave of Egypt, the wilderness becoming the grave of all one generation of Israel, and in judgments upon individuals and nations ; his mercy, in sending his Son, giving the Bible, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit ; in preserving the life of the child, surrounding him with friends and the means of grace ;—and then try to show the child the guilt of carrying a heart which does not rejoice under this government. If he trembles and is unhappy at the idea of having the eye of God continually upon him, it is because he is constantly doing wrong. This will open the door to teach him the doctrine of repentance, and to lead him to Christ.”\*

\* “Sunday School Teacher.”

2. Let the training of the infant be *Bible training*, —the Word of God the lesson book, and its sacred truths the texts; let the little ones be fed on the “sincere milk of the word.” The soul feeds on knowledge. It knows no other aliment. Do not deprive it of its birthright. All is not fit; food convenient is to be presented. This food is in the Bible. Moreover, it is God’s book, and bears authority with it. A celebrated writer has said, “The way of religious truth leads direct to the Bible, and the belief in the truth of the Bible is the corner stone of our faith.”

“Bible knowledge is the knowledge which we are most desirous may increase. Bible truth is the truth whose promotion we principally implore. This alone can save. Like some great principle of nature, incredibly simple and certain, it is only so much the more sublime, that it serves where all else fails, and achieves that of which everything else despairs.”\*

Where is the book so full of interest to children as the Bible. Fénelon advises, that we should not only tell children that we think it interesting, but make them feel it to be so. This they will do, if in training, “line upon line, here a little, and there a little,” we bring to bear upon the conscience and understanding the simple truths of Christianity, by the aid of facts in the form of narrative, precept, promise, and threatening, or otherwise.

\* Dr. R. W. Hamilton.

not be repressed. Let it search out, and let us guide the investigations. Other knowledge is useful; that which is in the Bible is saving. Our children will find the tree of knowledge anywhere; in the infant class let them be sure to find Jesus, the tree of Life. In the world they will find the books of men; in the school let them ever find the blessed book of God. Let it be the object of simple and unprejudiced study; not only explained, but enforced.

Still it may be said, Do you discard catechisms? We agree with Todd, that even "catechisms may be made bewitchingly interesting," and his own lectures afford evidence of this. But the elementary classes are not the places for them. The catechism in our schools has been abused; it has become the task and lesson-book, rather than the text-book for oral instruction. We cannot conceive any possible objection to its introduction in the other sections of the school, in advance of the infant class, but it must be the text, and not the lesson.

3. *Conversion* is the aim of the infant class teacher. All else is inferior and secondary. The supreme and ever-present object, with regard to these little ones, is to lead them gently on, and place them at the feet of Jesus. The truth of God alone can do this. It teaches of ruin, redemption, and regeneration. Children can exercise a clear faith as well as men. It is common to both, resting upon the one Foundation. Whatever religious

knowledge is necessary for one human being is essential to all. The little child who explained to her brother how their infant prayer reached the ear of the Almighty with acceptance, said of the blessed Saviour, “He takes our prayers and *puts them to rights*, dear, and then gives them to our Father in heaven.” How striking a lesson to many who have been long inquiring into the “manner of prayer.”

Some look to conversion as the *ultimate* end of teaching. Let us believe it to be possible *now*, and so labour, and so pray. “The object should be the conversion of the child, and this, not to be realised in years to come, but now. The great means to this end should be the distinct presentation of the wonderful facts of our redemption, clothed in the earnest solicitude of the teacher.”\*

4. To this end, we must *cultivate* the heart. The affections must be God’s, yielded up as a willing sacrifice. We wish our children to have tenderness of conscience, to refuse the evil and choose the good, to love the way in which they should go. This implies an attempt to fix principles of truth in their minds, which shall exercise so benign an influence, that the temper, feelings, and conduct shall all bear witness. And this is what is called *Bible training*, and practical religion. The ordinary teacher has for his single object, to

\* Dr. Reed’s “Advancement of Religion.”

teach his science effectually; but he who seeks to educate or *train*, must take a higher view, and pursue an end accordingly far more complicated. He must consider every part of his pupil's nature, physical, intellectual, and moral, regarding the cultivation of the last as paramount to any of the others. This is what Stow calls, "Godly upbringing."

5. We must seek to form *good habits*. Habits are formed by repeated actings. All our instruction must regard an end, that is—the *practice*. Here continued practice is needed,—indeed, it is involved in real education, and thus habits are formed. How true it is that we are the children of habit. Early formed within us, habits are very powerful, and if we wish them to be potent for good in our children, we must form them early. When once moulded, it is hard to contravene or overcome them. "For good or evil, if not resisted," says St. Augustine, "they become necessity." The up-grown oak is not more sturdy than early-formed habit. It is second nature. "It ought never to be forgotten, that right habits are indispensably necessary to enable a man to meet and resist temptation. Piety and courage were prominent in the character of Daniel; but after all, I should tremble to place any man in his circumstances, with the lions' den before him, who had not Daniel's habit of daily prayer."\*

\* Todd.

Teachers should educate the will as much as the understanding, and when it is urged that there is not time for moral training, we say there is the same opportunity as for the intellectual. Stow illustrates this by showing that we are called upon to "add to virtue, knowledge." So that virtue is a science claiming the first place in our consideration. To be intelligent is a great thing, but how immeasurably more important it is to be virtuously so. Let us

"Guard the first springs of thought and will,"

and cultivate good habits which, "though they seem to be but as the filmy line of the spider, trembling in the breeze, may prove links of tempered steel, binding a deathless being to eternal felicity. Let us, during the whole process of education, feel and fear the omnipotence of habit. For if the toiling atom beneath the waters is able to construct a reef, which may make the proudest ship a wreck, shall we dare to look upon the slightest evil habit, and say it is harmless? Though its work may have been done secretly, as under a flood, yet the cry of lost souls may be its herald at the judgment. The most certain mode for you to fix habits is, the silent ministry of example."\*

*Obedience* must be inculcated,—a reasonable obedience,—prompt and cheerful; not questioning

\* "Sigourney's Letters."

or hesitating, but instant. This habit, formed in our children, will be of incalculable service in the prosecution of our duties. Teach *how* to obey. Let it not be “Do as I say,” but “Do as I do.” It is well said, “Obedience, to the mind in its waxen state, is like the silken thread by which a plant is drawn towards the prop; enforced too late it is like the lasso, with which the wild horse is en-chained, requiring dexterity to throw, and strength to manage.”

*Truthfulness*—transparency of conduct—an out-spoken candour—is a cardinal virtue; nurture it kindly. All is not untruthful that is erroneous. Children often make mistakes without deceit or guile. We must carefully distinguish. Johnson says, “It is more from carelessness about truth, than intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world;” and this is emphatically true of children.

*Justice* is the life of all good government. Inculcate its principles in infancy, and teach it by practising thorough impartiality. Children have rights, and they know it. Their freedom, their property, their feelings, must be respected. Our power ought not to take advantage of their helplessness, and the law of justice, to be acted upon by them, must not be infringed by us.

*Generosity and benevolence.* The pity of a child is one of its strongest emotions. It often overcomes other feelings, as when the child wept for

Adam and Eve, that God should be so unkind as to turn them out of the beautiful garden ! he pitied their sorrow, while he forgot their sin. Taking hold of this tendency, it is easy to train children to acts of kindness, before selfishness takes hold of the heart. What is done should be voluntary. Forced giving is no more generosity than the giving that costs nothing. True benevolence is seen in self-denial.

*Forgiveness*—cheerful, hearty, loving. Who does not covet a forgiving spirit ! How lovely in man, but how difficult the exercise ! Yet childhood is always forgiving. Let us seek to preserve the same gentle spirit in them and in ourselves as years run on.

Habits of *attention and thought* are referred to elsewhere, as deserving our careful cultivation.

6. There are some *general principles* which the teacher of an infant class would do well to lay down and observe. We suggest a few.

The object, as we have seen, is to train the whole being by exercising faculties, even more than by the impartation of knowledge. To do this, we say to the teacher,

*Have a plan, and work by it.* We do not advise a precipitate selection, or the slavish adoption of any system. Hannah More says, “Method is the hinge of business ; it is like packing things in a box : a good packer will get in half as much more as a bad one.” A plan saves time, and if it allows freedom and adaptation, it insures variety.

*Be regular and constant.* Never absent, ever punctual. The infant class, of all classes, admits of no alternate teaching—a system injurious everywhere, but most so here. It is *your* class. Let no one divide the responsibility or the reward. Be you *the* teacher.

*Be circumspect and consistent.* Remember your example. “It is impossible,” says Adam Clarke, of a minister, “that he should ever be *a private* man. He is always living under the observation of mankind, and he who is always observed should never venture on dubious conduct.” How true this of the teacher! You paint your own picture on the minds of the children. Never let them see vacillation: be cautious in what you decide to do, be consistent in carrying out your decision. One rule to-day and another to-morrow will not serve your purpose. You will establish no rule at all. Foster says, “When a decisive spirit is recognised, it is singular to see how the space clears round a man, and leaves him room and freedom to act upon an equitable and enlightened system.”

7. *Study the constitution of mind;* not by poring over books, but by looking deeply into minds themselves, remembering the words of the poet,

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

You want to influence the child’s character;—seek to understand the child’s nature. Try to comprehend your children,—what is in them, to what influences they are most susceptible, what is the bent of the disposition, and what the motives that

impel them. See where virtue, weak and flagging, needs support; and where undeveloped intellect requires aid. It is difficult in so large a company, but the work is worth the doing; and by affording the means of skilful adaptation, you will have your reward.

8. *Be diligent, and aim at perfection.* We have the Divine command, "Thou shalt teach them diligently," and this is the only way to arrive at any measure of efficiency. Perfection is ever far off, but we are encouraged to aspire to it. To do this we must "follow on." He who aims high, strikes high. A friend of Michael Angelo seeing a statue in his studio still unfinished, asked him, "Have you not been idle?" "No!" was the reply, "I have been diligent in little things, a touch here, and a polish there; this is all, but trifles make perfection." A sculptor upon his dead marble ought not to surpass in patience those who fashion the living image, and whose work is upon the "fleshly tables of the heart."

9. *Do not attempt to teach too much.* It is a great art to know when to have done. Let the exercise, whatever it may be, be brought to a close before attention has ceased. Too long continuance is opposed to the principle of doing well what we do. Some teachers dig too deep, illustrating the remark of Robert Hall, who said, "These, diving too deep, bring up nothing but mud." Some enforce too many thoughts at once, which, as Row-

land Hill says, "batter upon the mind without entering it." We would say, have plenty of materials ready, and know how to use them. Be as Elihu, with a mind well furnished: "For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me; I will speak that I may be refreshed."\* An old author says, "In all your instructions avoid tedious prolixity. Nothing more disgusts a child's spirit than long discourses. Make up for shortness by frequency—a drop now and a drop then, as you pour water into a narrow-mouthed bottle. As you do when you begin to feed their bodies with a spoon, so must you do when you first begin to feed the souls of children with instruction." Let the first coat of paint dry before you again apply the brush.

\* Job xxxii. 18, 20.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE APPARATUS REQUIRED.

1. *The Gallery.*
2. *Letter Box.*
3. *Pictures and Maps.*
4. *Black Board.*
5. *Class Roll and Card.*
6. *Books.*
7. *The Library.*

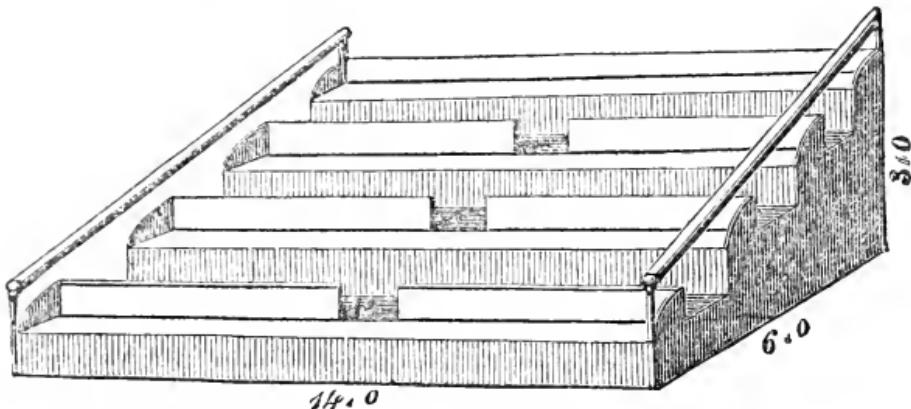
WE pass now to the requirements of the infant class in the way of apparatus. It is a serious mistake to suppose that great *appearances* are necessary. Let us be sure that as there may be large numbers and a great array of apparatus, even where there is little prosperity or improvement, so, on the other hand, there may, to the unpractised eye of the observer, appear few indications of movement while there is a real and regular advance. There is the noiseless progress of perfect order, as well as the hurried bustle of fruitless zeal. The class requisites are simple and inexpensive. Every part of the apparatus must be well fitted, but the machine itself is not complicate.

1. A *gallery* should be procured, after the model of the Glasgow plan. It gives an elevation most desirable for seeing and hearing, both to teacher and children. Raised seats will do if this cannot be obtained. To prevent disorder, space should be left at the sides for passing up and down, but none in the centre is needed, though some teachers

prefer it, as some ministers prefer an aisle in front of the pulpit. In the accompanying cut it will be seen that there are no side passages, and consequently the centre one is useful; and this may be best for galleries on so small a scale.

*For 40 Scholars.*

With backs to the seats, and side rails.

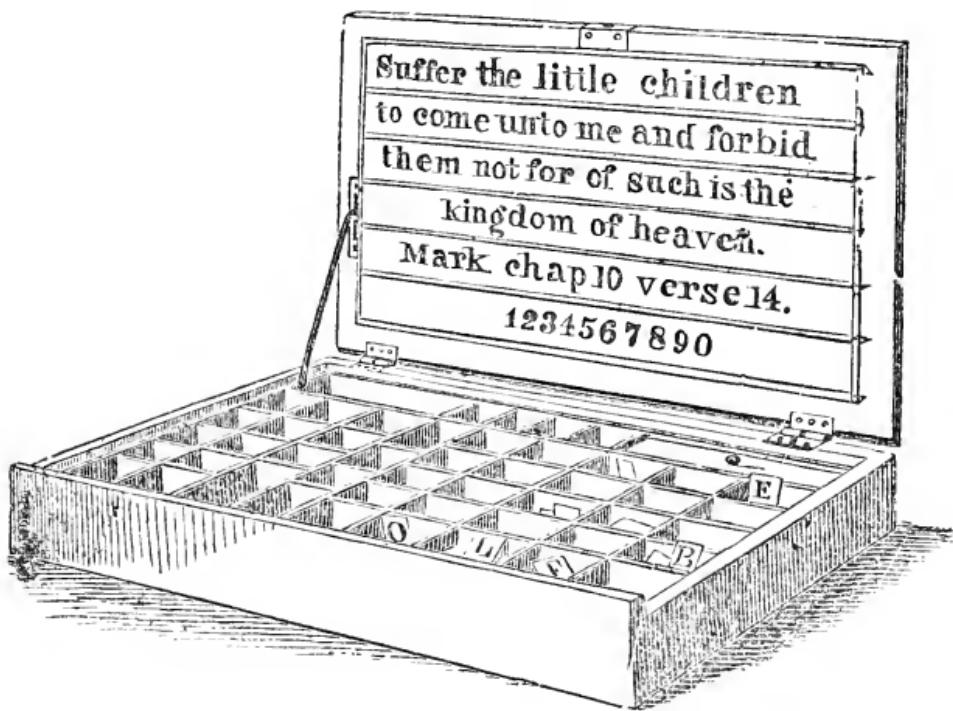


Where large ones are required, seven rows in each, rising from 6 to 10 inches high, will probably be found ample. Twelve children to each row will give 84. And as little bodies get wearied before the spirit tires, foot-boards and backs should be supplied, with ample space for the feet.

The *class requisites* are few. Supposing space enough to be left for the teacher in front of the gallery, he must have in his room his box of moveable letters on a stand; a stool, a few pictures, a black board, a piece of chalk and a wet sponge, a record book, a Bible, a hymn-book, a little library, a winter fire; and this is all.

2. The *letter box* is a great treasure. It consists

of a case, with compartments for letters printed and pasted on wood, and arranged much upon the plan of the printer's case, with capitals, italic letters, punctuation marks, and figures.



These boxes may be had in London at a small cost, and for much less than a carpenter could make a single one for. Still they may be made in rough fashion very inexpensively. We have seen them of all sorts and shapes.

The box, however, does not work by itself,—by magic, or miracle. The secret of success lies in using it well. A spade requires well handling, and a box will be like a mere spelling-book, if the only object is to teach to read.

3. *Pictures, prints, and maps.* The picturing out of which we have spoken *requires* no such help, but a reference to a print often assists in giving point to an explanation, and in deepening impressions. Lamartine says, "The sight of those Bible pictures inspired me, from most tender infancy, with a relish for good things." It is one way of training the eye, and if these pictorial illustrations are faithfully delineated, they will be very useful. The great danger is of impressing false and exaggerated notions, by reason of their want of truth; and next, that by their too frequent use they may beget mental indolence. A child will listlessly look on at a print, without the mind being exercised in the slightest degree.

4. A *black board* is very useful, and a simple piece of chalk has a wonderful power of fascination when skilfully used. The teacher, with a slight knowledge of drawing and perspective, may often aid his mental picturing by this means. The board may be hung against the wall, or placed on an easel.

5. The *register-book*. But little time need be spent in making the daily records, yet they must be punctually kept. A Numerical Register, or Class Roll, should be kept; and for all these things the teacher would do well to consult the "Book of Directions," published by the Sunday School Union.

## NUMERICAL REGISTER.

Date.	No.	Scholars' Names in full.	Age	Parent or Guardian.	Residence.	Dates on which the Scholars are placed in the main School.	Remarks.
						Re- moved.	
1849.							
July 1	445	Brook, Thomas	3	Brook, J.	7, Church-st.	1854.	
,, 8	446	Smith, Caroline	5	Smith, C.	13, George-st.	Aug. 5,	

There should be an alphabetical index, containing the name and register number of each scholar, according to the annexed form:—

Scholars' Names.	Register No.
B.	
Brook, Thomas .....	445
Butler, Edward .....	469

In addition to this, we should recommend a tin case, in which attendance cards ruled with 20 lines should be placed, bearing the name and full address of each child, together with the father's name and occupation. They can be marked with a pencil, and when the results are posted at the end of the year, the secretary may clean and issue them again.

The advantage will be found in connexion with a plan of visitation,\* which we shall notice under its proper head.

\* See "Visitation," page 117.

Register No. 69.

District 3.

HENRY EDWARDS,  
 SON OF WILLIAM EDWARDS, GROCER,  
 3, *Newmarket Place, Whitechapel.*

DATE.	CAUSE OF ABSENCE.

The teacher should have a *pocket-book*, not to be locked up and left at school, but to be taken home and carried about. To do his duty in the week he will often have need of it. The "Class Register and Diary" of the Union is admirably suited for this purpose.

A Bible with marginal references, (the Pictorial Bible, if it could be afforded,) and a Hymn-book, are the only books needful. The latter must be chosen for its simplicity and careful selection, and every child able to read at all, should be encouraged to have one. The Scholars' Hymn Book is not suitable; the Infant Hymn Book, specially prepared

by the Union for this object, and Mr. Curwen's, may be suggested as the most appropriate.

We have found in use, in some schools, books which profess to teach tune and truth together, but surely it is time we abandoned such a mode of teaching as the following:—

“ The woman's seed shall surely tread,  
Though wounded, on the serpent's head :  
In Abram's, Isaac's, Jacob's seed,  
Shall all the earth be bless'd indeed.

“ Judah's sceptre shall not cease  
Till Shiloh come, the Prince of Peace :  
His place of birth, his line, his tribe,  
The prophets carefully describe.

“ Born of a virgin he shall be,  
Immanuel, God with us, is He :  
These records, in the hands of Jews,  
Prove the Messiah they refuse.” \*

7. A *little library* for the elder children will be of great value. Though suitable books are few, they are rapidly increasing with the demand; and the few there are, are highly prized and give great delight.† Children at this age like to be confided in, and they may safely be trusted.

\* “ Infant Teacher's Assistant,” p. 16.

† “ This provision may be made by a grant from the school committee, or by a small fund specially raised for the purpose. Where the pecuniary resources of the school render it necessary, application may be made to the Sunday School Union, for a grant of library books at half the

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE TEACHER AT WORK.

*The day's proceedings. — 1. Morning exercises. — 2. The separate service. — 3. Afternoon engagements.*

It may be desirable to gather up into a practical shape what has now been noticed in reference to plans and agencies, by sketching out, in imagina-

selling prices. For this purpose, a printed list of books, and form of application, can be procured from the Depository of the Union in London ; which form is to be filled up, and recommended by the Committee of an Auxiliary, or a Country Sunday School Union.

“The application is, in all cases, to be transmitted to the Committee in London. As an inducement to make frequent additions to the library, all schools in connexion with the London Auxiliaries or Country Unions may purchase library books, selected from the Sunday School Union Catalogue, at the reduced prices, *annually*, in amounts of not less than £2, and not exceeding £8, retail prices, upon the application being recommended by the Committee of the Union with which such schools are connected.

“To preserve these books, and to facilitate their distribution, a bookcase is to be fixed in the school or library room, fitted up with shelves, six inches deep, at distances to correspond with the height of the books. All the books should be covered with strong cartridge, or other suitable paper.”

tion, how such a class should be worked, upon the model we have presented.

## THE DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

1. We suppose a room has been prepared, planned, and fitted, that all the essentials are there, with a full attendance of children, and a model teacher. The children have perhaps assembled with the main school, and have been present at the opening exercises, as it is well they should be, once in the day, if convenient. They come in in order, and therefore quietly, and passing up the right or left aisle of the gallery, take their own appointed seats without delay; the teacher taking his place in front. Having marked the attendance, he calls for the verses of last Sunday's lesson, explained then, and voluntarily learnt during the week. He blames none because they have not committed them to memory, for it is a thing done of *their own accord*. He opens his Bible and reads, the children repeating, clause by clause, after him. The portion read contains the subject of the collective lesson for the day. With a stored mind, and a happy manner, he works out his subject, reducing it to its simplest elements, breaking it up, and meting it out to the weakest capacity. He attracts the senses, and captivates the feelings; he throws in variety by the discreet use of illustration, question, and ellipsis; he draws his lesson, and presents his appeal. His work is done. There is no sign

of weariness,—all eyes are on him ; he has dropped the seed quietly, but at the right moment, and, he hopes, into prepared ground.

The pause is broken. A well-known verse is mentioned, the children rise and sing, if in an apartment within the school, softly, or, as it may be termed, "singing in a whisper," which children are very fond of doing. The Bible lesson for the afternoon is then set up in the lid of the letter-box. The children, knowing what it is, help, as they can in this interesting process, not with their hands, but orally, by suggesting the component parts of the sentence. It is at last completed, and read through. Every word needing it is explained, and this need is ascertained by questions on the separate words, which, if necessary, are pictured out. The *Bible* lesson is reserved for the afternoon. A few verses are sung, and a brief prayer offered ;—the morning exercise is closed.

2. *The separate service* is, in some sense, a new invention, though really it is but the adaptation of a principle long since recognised. The proposal is but an advanced step in the great movement which we have been wont to denominate *progression* ; and the development of this new feature in our Sunday-school history, is but the natural result of the adoption of plans, the wisdom of which was once much questioned by great and wise men, who predicted, as some do now, the most disastrous results.

Since the institution of the Sunday-school system, what wonderful changes has this progressive principle wrought! The school-room, once the scene of mere discipline, is now the seat of learning,—a stipendiary agency, hired for a shilling a day, is now superseded by a noble band of gratuitous instructors,—pious teachers have taken the place of unconverted monitors, and the door once barred against the little child is open now to the infant of tenderest years. All these changes we owe to this same principle, which now, in this age of earnest thought, advances with steady step, and asks, as a matter of *consistency*, A SEPARATE SERVICE for young children; and as a matter of convenience and economy, in some places, A CHILDREN'S CHAPEL.\*

Worship is an act of the heart, and consequently, if the heart be not engaged, there can be no worship. It is notorious, that the heart of infancy is not engaged in the worship of the sanctuary, as at present conducted; nor can it be, for neither the singing, the reading of the scriptures, the prayers, and more especially the sermon, are suitable, and our own experience tells us how little this can be entered into by a childish capacity.

\* The author of this book has collected from all the principal towns in England and Wales the statistics upon this subject, the result of which is to prove, that almost everywhere objections have been overcome, and the experiment having been successful, the new scheme of infant service has become a fixed institution in every school.

What is the present system? Suppose the school assembled in the crowded gallery, the teachers at their post, and the minister in the pulpit. A hymn is given out,—it is not in the scholar's hymn-book. He listens, but he cannot remember the “lining out” of a whole verse, or perhaps it is sung through without being “given out,” and his voice is dumb. But say the child has a book; the hymn selected is not calculated to awaken *his* devotional sentiment; he may sing, but he does not feel—he does not understand. Now there is, in the simple vocal melody of children, themselves being the melodists, an incitement to cheerfulness, and that which disposes them to pleasurable feelings at the very opening of the service. To insure this, the hymns should be of the very simplest devotional character, in language and sentiment within their comprehension, and the tune should be well known, sprightly and cheerful. But for the want of all this, that very portion of the public service best adapted to win the attention of the little child, has not only no charm, but is wearisome and tedious.

*The word of God is read*,—but here again the child is at fault; for though he may have his Bible, he is not prepared to follow the continuous reading of the minister. The good old day of expounding has gone by; and while the little, active, inquisitive mind would suggest its many questions, and start its numberless difficulties, the lesson for the

day has been read, but, perhaps, without one word of comment,—the book is closed, and the congregation are engaged in prayer.

*The minister offers prayer*, and the children stand; but the thoughts, the phraseology, the petitions, are those of the matured Christian mind. The wants of childhood are not expressed, the heart of infancy is not engaged. How can it be?

*The minister preaches.* Nothing can be more improving than the beautiful precepts of Christianity, exemplified by the actions and words of Christ, and the illustrations he has left us for our example, imitation, and warning; yet there is a Scripture knowledge too high for these little ones, and pulpit instruction cannot be equally adapted to the two great sections of the congregation. Ministers everywhere confess and deplore it.

It is the Sabbath morning. The minister speaks to the people of God. He *discourses*; doctrinal questions, metaphysical subtleties, prophetic speculations engage his mind. He is argumentative, spiritual, and intellectual,—he speaks, to whom? The children? Certainly not. They need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God; they are such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. Simplicity, beautiful everywhere, is indispensable in the matter of Sunday-school instruction, the very essence of its excellence. But if children cannot understand, why have them in that gallery? “That they may be under the

weekly observation of the church and congregation!"\* Surely this would not be deemed a sufficient reason.

Children may go and remain, but they do not worship. They sit in the appointed place, and for the prescribed time, but it is a constraint and weariness to be there, and they are glad to make their escape. Children uninterested will be unruly. We require that they shall be idle and quiet at the same time. It is a thing impossible; and any enforcement of such a law renders the state of the child one of complete misery.

And what is the position of the teachers set to keep order? If they be tender-hearted and reasonable, they relax the code of discipline; but if not, then a fierce warfare goes on, in which children, unoccupied, and uncomfortable, restless, fretful, and obstinate, use every expedient to while away the time, and teachers, irritated and defied, distribute at discretion, and too often with anger,

*"Unapostolic knocks and blows"*

upon the heads of their little prisoners. Poor children! every whisper checked; deprived of the book dexterously hidden in the cap; the pencil and paper taken away; even the solace of sleep denied; is not their position likely to excite the sympathetic pity of the congregation? If it does

\* "Evangelical Magazine," 1849. Article, "Separate Services."

not, it is because these things are not inquired into. Yet, do the occupants of the pew never witness those scenes of contention? Did they never hear the buzz of undisguised delight when the minister closed the book, in token of the near approach of the hour of liberation?

We do not intend to enter into the argument here, for we have not space to do so, but we venture to lay it down as a principle, that infants cannot greatly profit by the services of the sanctuary, adapted, as they are in all respects, for the adult mind; and that in forcing their attendance, we deal unwisely, for while we profess to form good habits, we most certainly induce, in this case, a bad one, too often creating and fostering dislike of all religious services in after years. It is in consequence of this dislike that the discrepancy between our *morning* and afternoon attendance is often found, and hence arises the abandonment of many *morning* infant classes. A child ought always to be light-hearted; but here all the tendencies are to depress and to provoke unholy temper. At his tender age he is unprepared for deep and protracted mental excitement or effort; and yet we reprove him in the morning for a weariness he cannot overcome, and in the afternoon discourse upon the *pleasures* of religious service. How natural the remark of the little girl, who having said, "I would rather not go to heaven," was asked the reason, and replied, "Nurse says, it will be *always Sunday* there."

Her Sabbaths had been dull and heavy days. Were it not well to implant in these dear lambs a love of religious exercise, and the sacred duties of the Lord's-day?

It is scarcely fitting that blame should rest on the minister, because he fails to fix the wandering thoughts of careless listeners; or that the failure should be attributed to a want of diligence on the part of the teacher in the school-room. It lies on the system which perpetuates so irrational a plan. It is not the want of more discipline or more obedience: its cause is to be found in the entire want of *adaptation*; and because of this, and this alone, do we desire to see the system altered.

Besides, where are the good results of this system? What are our own recollections of sermons heard in childhood? Does it result in a good habit of coming to God's house, and attending while there? Where are the thousands who have passed through our schools and from our influence into the world? When allowed to choose for themselves, does the will constrain them to come to the sanctuary? On the contrary, it is stated to be a well-ascertained fact, that we retain only *five* out of every *hundred* of our scholars in our congregations.\* Where are the proofs of early conversion? When they do occur, is it ascribable to the *direct* ministrations from the *pulpit*, or to the close,

\* See also Mr. Horace Mann's Census returns of 1851.

urgent, and convincing appeals of the parent, the pastor, or the teacher?

The separate service is instituted solely with a view of counteracting this admitted difficulty, by teaching little children in their own way, and leading them to understand and appreciate in future life the ministrations of the pastor. It is conducted much as follows: The elder children having gone to the chapel, and the school-room being unoccupied, the infants, and other children under ten years of age, are assembled in the larger space. They have but one teacher, taken in turn from three or four, thoroughly qualified and prepared to take the service in rotation. No monitors—no rods—no rewards—none are needed.

The service commences. The little company are on their knees; the teacher repeats the Lord's Prayer; and the little voices repeat it too. A hymn is selected, it is in the "Infant's Hymn Book," and sung to one of the few chaste and simple tunes fit for children; they join in praise, with a spirit and life that would give a lesson to many congregations. And what a wondrous charm lies in music, as says Sir Philip Sydney, "It holdeth children from their play, and old men from their chimney corner;" and "these sweet words of sweetly uttered knowledge" are delightful as the act of intelligent interest.

The principle of the training system, as we have already seen, is that children use no words which

they do not understand, and therefore, in singing as in reading, they are questioned and informed, so that, thenceforward, the language may be employed intelligently.

The Bible is the only book used, and from this a portion is read in a clear and audible tone, the children repeating, clause by clause ;—a parable, a psalm, or a narrative, is thus read ; then the teacher questions the children, and the children question him ; a few minutes only are occupied, and again the little congregation kneels in prayer.

Prayer is offered, not by the teacher *for* the children, but *with* them. He who prays thus, followed word by word in all he says, must study the language he has to use, as much as he who teaches the deaf and dumb. Doing this, he cannot fail to enlist the sympathies of the children ; so much so, that in many cases requests come from these little ones, that a sick mother, a brother gone to sea, or some one in whose want and woe they feel a tender interest, may be prayed for. Thus a teacher literally *gathers up the petitions*, and, accompanied by the children, presents them at the throne of grace.

The exercise lasts but a few minutes, and again the song is raised. Another hymn, one well known, is sung without being given out ; or, if needs be, different children are called upon to give the verses for the sake of those who do not remember. So, at intervals, breaking into the subsequent service, the signal is given, the position changed, the verse

sung, and again the children, refreshed and full of animation, are listening to the voice of the teacher.

The sermon comes next. The effort is by no means a preaching one, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. The art of sermonizing is to make truth simple and easy to the comprehension of the auditory, and to apply it to their hearts. So here, a subject is given ; it may be a word or a sentence, a verse or a parable, the object is to render it plain, and for this purpose it is pictured out, and the lesson it contains impressively enforced. The teacher labours for this, and is only satisfied as he feels his success. He adopts the infant class methods, transfuses his ideas into the thoughts of childhood, availing himself of suitable illustrations, and the box of letters, as in the Bible lesson.

Let an experienced teacher speak to us in her own language. " Speak of the dove that winged its way back to the ark, and of the good man who put forth his hand and drew her in through the window, to gladden her sorrowing mate. Tell how the wide wasting waters swept over a disobedient world. Describe the lonely ark upon the mighty deep, bearing in safety the righteous family, while all the ungodly of the earth were drowned. Speak of the brow of Ararat rising above the dark main, of the exultation of the rescued animals, the warbling song of the birds let loose from their prison, and the higher joy of Noah, and his beloved ones, who knew how to pray and praise their almighty

Deliverer. One sacred story, thus broken into parts, is sufficient for many feelings of the infant mind. Be careful not to surfeit it, nor yet too much to indulge the curiosity of the ear to hear, without awakening the understanding to extract some useful aliment. In the broad range of sacred story, give a prominent place to the life and teachings of our Saviour, to the many forms in which his compassions wrought among the sick, the hungering, and the blind, the tempest-tost, the dying, and the dead ; how he loved little children, and drew them to his bosom, and blessed them, when sterner souls forbade their approach.

“ Not only by the volume of Inspiration, but by their daily intercourse with the animal creation, and from the ever open page of nature, guide them to duty and to God. Teach their little feet to turn aside from the worm, and spare to trample the nest of the toiling ant. Point out the bird, ‘ laying the beams of its chambers ’ among the green leaves, or the thick grass, and make them shudder at the cruelty which could rifle its treasures. Inspire them with love for all innocent creatures, with admiration for every beautiful thing ; for it is sweet to see the principles of love and beauty leading the new-born soul to its Maker.

“ As you explain to the young child the properties of the flower that he holds in his hand, speak with a smile of Him, whose ‘ touch perfumes it, and whose pencil paints.’ Make the voice of

the first brook as it murmurs beneath the snow, and the gesture of the waving corn, and the icicle with its pen sharpened by frost, and the sleeted pane with its fantastic tracery, and the nod of the awful forest, and the fixed star on its burning throne, adjuncts in teaching your child the wonderful works of the Almighty.”\*

Often the teacher is asked questions. Often objections are started, but these, instead of hindering, serve to keep up an unwearied interest. If attention flags, a verse is thrown in, the posture changed while singing, and all is right again.

The sermon, thus broken up in its delivery, occupies the largest portion of the time. When finished, thoughts may be *fixed* by a recurrence to the principal points, closing the service with singing, and the benediction.

The tax upon the mind is not great. The attention is not kept up too long on any one subject. It is not the length of time, but want of employment, with which the child finds fault; and cheerfulness, variety, and an earnest manner, tend to render the exercise pleasing and profitable. The service has been spread over an hour and a half, and yet few signs of weariness are visible, and delighted parents come from the chapel to take their happy little ones by the hand, and conduct them safely home.

If this *can* be done, is it not well? The argu-

\* Si gourney.

ment against the plan is that it is an innovation, and not a divinely-appointed agency. But these grounds are surely no more tenable than they are reasonable. The school is not of Divine appointment, and if the teacher is in his place there, teaching religion in the infant class, so certainly is he well appointed to take the separate service, and teach the same religion there.\* If one-sixth part of the population are infants, ought there not to be some suitable provision made for their wants? Besides, is not the Sunday school the place for conversion. It is set forth as a conclusion not lightly arrived at, "that nineteen-twentieths of the British Missionaries, and a large proportion of the evangelical ministers of Great Britain, became pious, or received their first permanent religious impressions, while connected with a Sunday school." And a most useful London minister says, "I deliberately affirm, that a very large proportion of those whom it has been my privilege to deal with, in the capacity of candidates for Christian fellow-

\* "The teacher occupies a position midway between the fireside and the pulpit. The teachers are the pastor's assistants in the work of God. They aim at the same object as himself. They are pastors in miniature, they are feeding the future flocks in embryo, they are moulding the generation to come. They are the pastor's right arm. Without them and their labours, how stupendous however his abilities, and whatever his industry, he must always come immeasurably short of the results otherwise attainable."—*Campbell's Letters*.

ship, have dated their first serious impressions to the Sunday school."

The object we have in view is to make the Sabbath a delight, and that the *whole* of it may be so, this substitute for the ordinary public worship is proposed. So popular is this separate service, that elder children beg hard to stay. On every hand the prejudice against it is giving way, and many ministers are not only consenting to its adoption, but taking their turn in its performance, becoming, like the venerable Charles of Bala, as "children for the children's sake;" or as the tender-hearted Doddridge, who said, "I am not ashamed of these little services, for I had rather feed the lambs of Christ than rule a kingdom."

The proposal for establishing a CHILDREN'S CHAPEL has been made very much to meet the difficulty arising from a deficiency of suitable teachers; for it was thought, and very justly, that if in a town there were three or four schools willing to unite, it would be more desirable to have *one* service than *four*, occupying the time of four teachers. This is held in some large room or vacant chapel, the children coming from their various schools. Thus, there is an adjournment to the *chapel*. It is a separate place; is "a real chapel" perhaps, with all "the idea of the sanctuary" attached to it. As a matter of convenience and economy of means, this is a most desirable plan.

The great argument against the whole scheme

appears to be kept out of view ; but though mighty and stubborn, it is always the final obstacle. It stands in the way of all improvement, and cries out lustily whenever we venture near its privileged boundary. *Custom*, however, though almost invincible, is not eternal.

If then it be true, that there is little advantage to children from these adult services, beyond the impression of solemnity likely to be made on the young mind by the act of witnessing the worship of the great congregation, how great must be the loss ! It is well known that those schools flourish best which give the longest time to the teacher for direct intercourse with his class ; but here we lose a moiety of the little space allowed us. We desire to have the *whole* time for this great object ; and in doing so, we only ask an extension of that influence already allowed. And if *pious* teachers are appointed with the full approval of the pastor and his church, if they are trained by him, and earnest in their work, ought they not to be worthy of such a trust ? Do they "infringe the prerogative" of the minister ? Already they are the *pastors* of the little flock. Why debar them from this interesting service ? Why not permit them thus to feed the lambs ?

In leaving this subject, we must refer our readers, for a fuller insight into this important discussion, to Mrs. Davids's Prize Essay, "The Sunday School ;" a lengthened correspondence of recent

date in the “Evangelical” and other magazines, and the admirable lectures delivered for the Sunday School Union, by the Rev. Samuel Martin, of Westminster, from which we make the following extracts:—

Mr. Martin says, “The public services of most Christian congregations consist in worship and preaching. Those who conduct these services contemplate, chiefly if not exclusively, the minds and hearts of *adults*. In the majority of instances children are a minority in the congregation; but even if children be the majority, these services are not instituted for them. The minister has been called on these particular occasions to lead the devotions of *adults*, and to preach to *adults*. On these occasions the case of the adult is the more important; and no man, in our judgment, can at the same time successfully minister to persons of widely distant years.

“If the Bible contained any *law* upon the subject of children’s attendance on Divine worship, we need but to direct every Sabbath-school teacher to that book of statutes, and ask ‘What readest thou?’ But we have found no precept concerning this matter. If *instances* of children attending general worship were recorded in the New Testament, we might refer to the authority of precedent. But we are not aware that the Bible records such cases. The Hebrew male children from twelve years old were required to go up with their fathers three times a year to Jerusalem; but in this is neither law nor precedent on the question before us. We are left to judge by what appears wise and likely to be useful. And thus judging, we are prepared to advise—‘Appoint and conduct separate services for Sabbath-school children.’ Our reasons for this advice are as follow:—

“First. Services adapted to children can alone be expected to beget among the young the habit of attending public worship. It is said, ‘hereby you form the habit

of attending God's house.' From this we entirely dissent. Is it in the character of our ordinary services to interest children? and can it be? But where interest is not felt habit is not formed; or, if habit be formed, it is destitute of the element of intelligence and of conscience. Without appealing to facts, therefore, we affirm, that the habit of attending public worship cannot be formed by children attending services not adapted to their case. The habits of listlessness, wandering of the eyes, restlessness, playing, talking, wishing for the final Amen, longing for the time when they can spend their Sabbath as they please, and such like, *are* formed; and regarding our Sabbath-school children *en masse*, we know of no other.

"Secondly. Separate services can alone speak with children to God, or speak for God to children.

"Thirdly. Separate services can alone be expected in any large measure to be the means of the conversion of children. In what does converting power abide, or with what is it connected? There is no virtue in the *place* of Christian assembly: 'The heart alone can make divine religion's spot.' There is no abstract and absolute God's house. God's house is that spot or structure which to our hearts is a meeting-place with God. The building which is 'amiable' to the Christian through associations of God's presence therewith, is not lovely to the mind that has not connected with it corresponding thoughts.

"Fourthly. The objects for which Sabbath-school children are conducted to public worship can only be extensively realised in separate services. We have stated that worship and ministration specially adapted to children, can alone be expected to engender a devotional taste and to form a devotional habit—that in such services alone can the fellowship and attention of children be reasonably looked for—and that we cannot hope for conversions among children as the result of ordinary ministration. We know of no other object for which children are conducted to our houses of instruction and prayer; and it would hence ap-

pear that hundreds of thousands of children are assembled every Lord's-day in our places of public worship without an object or end.

"Fifthly. We do not hesitate to assert that injury is inflicted by the attendance of children on ordinary public services.

"We proceed to inquire,—is the establishment of separate services possible? For such services we need, first, a *ministry*. This we believe our Sabbath-school staff and the communion of our churches would supply. We require, in each school, one or more Christian men who are gifted for this work, and who are willing to stir up the gift that is in them. To commit this work to teachers indiscriminately, calling on persons in rotation to conduct the service, merely because they are teachers, would at once secure ruin to the project. No person must attempt this service who is not qualified, or who is unwilling to extend his ability by careful cultivation.

"For such services a separate building is most desirable, if not essential. By taking the children of a school from one building to another, the idea of school is broken up, and the notion of a place of worship is suggested.

"A ministry and a building are, we repeat, the means required; and these means we believe to be within the reach of a large majority of Sabbath schools. The only question is one of *time*. Can it be done immediately, or are several years necessary to collect funds and to train individuals for this particular service? That some difficulties are in the path of this greatly-needed reformation, we hesitate not to admit. But impediments in any career are surely not to prevent our entrance upon it. Nothing worth reaching has ever yet been gained by a smooth path; and the delay which difficulties occasion should quicken our desire to attain the end; while, by eliciting our powers and resources, obstacles should make the attainment of our object doubly sure. The principle involved in separate services is already acknowledged in the existence of school

hymn-books, and in the adaptation of school addresses to the case of the scholars; all we seem to need is, to give a principle already adopted, *a clear course*.

“To such as are doubting on the subject of separate services, and to those who decide that they cannot be established and ought not to be tried, we say—OBSERVE, INQUIRE, THINK. Notice a school of children in a place of worship—search into the effect of their attendance there—check your own opinions and impressions by the testimony of others, and then decide. But do not incur the disgrace of forming a judgment without inquiry and observation.

“To such as are convinced that separate services are desirable, we suggest:—Be *patient* with those, your fellow-labourers, who have not reached your conclusion; and *patient* in waiting, if needful, an opportunity to introduce the change which your own convictions suggest. But send forth the feet of the *ox* as well as the feet of the *ass*. Be *persevering* in the use of legitimate means to attain your end, while you are patient in waiting for it. Converse with your pastors. Introduce the subject to the attention of the parents of the children. Hold out the prospect to the children themselves. And thus sowing beside all waters you will assuredly be blessed in reaping the result which such exertions are directed to secure.”

3. *The afternoon exercises* stretch over a longer period, and are, therefore, the chief object of the day; the Bible lesson is reserved till then. There is also, ordinarily, a better and more punctual attendance, and the teacher is therefore not so likely to be disturbed. The visitors attend at the opening hour, to take away the cards of the absentees, and the record of attendance is marked. A hymn is sung, prayer is offered, questions are put as to

the explanation of the words of the lesson given the previous Sabbath, and then the teacher commences. He selects a narrative, a parable, or an emblem, involving doctrine and precept, and embodying gospel truth. He brings every appliance to his aid ;—with copious information, and enriching by illustration, he draws the bold outline of his picture, then gradually fills up the parts with minuteness and precision, till the lights and shadows are distinctly brought out, and the work is graphically portrayed in the minds of his audience. He breaks in upon the lesson by singing, and again he recurs to it, and having secured feeling, he seeks to impress truth upon the conscience and heart. By pointed appeals, tender solicitations, urgent warnings, he strives to lead his little ones to feel a sense of sin, a need of pardon, and to rejoice in the promise of a free salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ. His manner is earnest, his heart is warm with the work. It has spoken with the hearts of his children. He has implanted some fine moral sentiment, and the truths of the gospel, clothed in the simple imagery of nature, have been lodged in their proper resting-place. He feels that his labour is not in vain—he thanks God, and takes courage. The subject of the next Sabbath morning's lesson is given, explained, and then repeated. If time allow, a hymn or portion of Scripture is then taught by dictation. Prayer is offered, the absentee cards are received from the visitors,

and the children are dismissed, marching out in order, as they sing their parting hymn.

Thus we have endeavoured to sketch the outline of a day's proceedings.

The following is presented as a specimen of the morning address. It is by Mrs. Hooker.

#### CREATION OF THE WORLD.

“ My dear children, you live in a pleasant world. How happy it makes you to walk out in the fields, and to look at all the beautiful things that God has made and given to you. There is the glorious sun which sheds such a blaze of light that your eyes can hardly bear to look at it. Have you never seen it when it rises in the morning, and shines upon the steeples and the windows, and makes the drops of dew on the grass to glitter like the diamond in a lady's ring? Do you not love to look upon it when it sets in the evening, with purple, and red, and golden clouds all around it? If it were not for the sun it would be always dark, and we could not read or work without a candle. And if we were to walk out, we could not see the colour of the grass, or flowers, or houses, or trees; everything would look black. How thankful you should be to God, who has made the sun to give us light !

“ Then there is the moon, that rises in the evening, and sends such a pleasant, soft light into your chamber windows. And the many, many stars that twinkle every clear night, all over the heavens. Do you not thank God for making the bright moon, and beautiful stars ?

“ Sometimes your parents, or your elder brothers or sisters, take you into the orchards and groves where you can gather fruit and flowers, and hear the birds sing, and see the little fishes swimming about in the clear rivulets. Do you know who made all these things, which it makes you so happy to see and hear ? Yes, you know, for your parents have told you that God made them. Do you wish

to learn how he made them? I will try to tell you out of the Bible. Six thousand years ago—I do not know but these are more years than some of you can count, but it was a very great while ago—the great God who lives in heaven above began to make this world. And he made it in six days. This world is sometimes called the earth. It was not difficult for God to create the earth. It was very easy. He could have created it in a moment. But he chose that it should be six days before it was finished, and he rested on the seventh day. I will tell you presently *why* he rested on the seventh day.

“In the place where God chose to make the world, it was very dark and gloomy. There was no land to tread upon, and no clear sky. And God said, Let there be light, and the light instantly began to shine. And he divided the light from the darkness, and when the light shined he called it day, and when the darkness came he called it night. This was the first day.

“The next day, God made the air which is all around the earth. Do you know what the air is? You cannot see it, but every time you breathe you draw it into your nostrils, and it goes into your body and keeps you alive. And sometimes you can feel it blow upon your cheek. When you see the leaves on the trees move, it is the air that shakes the leaves. Do you remember, when it was winter, how you drew your chairs close to the fire, and heard the wind whistle, as it blew around the house and through the trees? That was the air that you heard, for the wind is only the air moving very fast. The air helps the plants to grow. How good God was to make the air, that men and animals might breathe, and that the grass, and trees, and flowers, might grow up all over the earth.

“The third day, the earth was all covered with the waters. And God commanded the waters to flow away from the high places on the earth, and to run into the deep places which he had made for them. And the high places were left dry and hard, and were called land, and the waters

were called seas and rivers. Now there was nothing to be seen on the land but the brown earth, with the rocks and stones scattered about upon it. And God commanded the grass and trees to grow, and the earth was, in an instant, covered with a beautiful green carpet of grass, and the tall trees grew up in thick groves upon the hills, and the fruit trees were loaded with fruit in the valleys, and the sweet flowers opened their tender blossoms.

“On the fourth day, God said, Let there be lights in the heavens to divide the day from the night, so that we may count the days, and the seasons, and the years. So God made two great lights: the greater light, which was the sun, to shine by day; and the lesser light, which was the moon, to shine by night. He made the stars also, and set them in their places in the heavens. And now the fourth day ended, and the world was finished. You may think how fresh and beautiful it was. But though it was so beautiful, it was very still; for there were no living creatures upon it. There were no birds to sing in the branches of the thick woods. There were no fishes to play in the waters. There were no cattle to eat grass in the meadows. God saw the earth when it was made, and said that it was good; but there were no men and women to see and admire it, and praise God for his great works. The sun went down that night on a silent world.

“On the fifth day, God began to create animals. He spoke, and the fishes and fowls lived. Then all at once, the waters were covered with fowls of every kind, which sprang out of the waters, and flew away into the air. There was the noble eagle, which is called the king of birds, because he is larger and stronger than most birds, and he can fly higher than any other bird. If you had been there, you would have seen him rising out of the water, and flying up towards the sun, which he loves very much to look upon. And the pretty peacock alighted upon the grass, and shook the drops of water from his bright feathers, that are covered all over with spots like stars. The little

birds flew into the woods, and began to build their nests among the leaves of the trees. And while they were at work they sung for joy. And there were a great many others that I have not time to tell you about.

“ But we must not forget the fishes which had just begun to move about in the waters. The sea was almost filled with them. Some of them have fins that help them to swim very fast. Some of them are covered with a thin coat of shell. These creep about on the sand, or hide in the rocks at the bottom of the sea. Some of them lie quite still in their shell houses. Others have wings, and can fly a little way into the air ; and others live in a boat of shell, and when they choose they can rise to the top of the water, and put up a little sail that grows upon their bodies, and the wind blows them along, just as it does ships. This is all that was done on the fifth day.

“ The sixth and last day was now come. And God commanded the earth to bring forth all the animals that walk or creep upon the earth. And as soon as God had spoken, beasts of every kind came up out of the ground. Oh ! how many of them there were. We cannot think of them all at once, there were so many. The great elephant was there, and the cunning fox, and the generous horse, and the faithful dog, and the timid sheep. And all sorts of beasts, and serpents, and insects, were there. They were very different from each other. Some of them could run very swiftly. Others were very strong and large. Some of them had teeth and claws which were very sharp. Some of them knew a great many things, and others were very ignorant and stupid. Some of them chose to live alone, and they went away into the mountains, and caves, and lonely places. Others, like the cattle and sheep, were fond of company, and they went about together, in flocks and herds.

“ And now all the beasts, and birds, and fishes were created, and had begun to find out their places to live in, and to enjoy themselves in the way they liked best. Can you think of anything else that was wanting to make this world complete ? Yes, there was something wanting.

God had made a great many curious animals, but not one among them knew that God made him, or could understand anything about God. And if they could not understand anything about God, they could not love and obey him. They could not pray to him. They could not thank him for his goodness in making them so happy. A dog knows more than other animals. You can teach your dog many things. You can teach him to love you, and follow you about, and to thank you when you give him food. You can teach him to find your handkerchief, if you have lost it. You can teach him to watch by your house at night, and keep away the thieves who wish to come in and steal. He will be very sorry when you are sick ; or when you have fallen down and hurt yourself. But you cannot teach him that God made him. Oh no ! If you were to tell him this, he would not understand you. You love your dog for being so grateful and obedient ; and you do not blame him for not thinking about God, because you know he cannot understand such things.

“So God determined to create a man and woman ; and to give them reason, that they might know something about God, and love him, and obey him. And God made Adam and Eve, and placed them in the garden of Eden. It was a very fine garden, which God had made on purpose for them to live in. And God told Adam and Eve that they might rule over all the animals ; and he said that all the animals must obey Adam and Eve. And God made all the beasts, and fowls, and every living creature, to go to Adam ; and Adam gave them names ; and they were afterwards called by the names which Adam had given them.”

This should be followed by an earnest appeal to the children to love this great God, who, when man had sinned, did not spare His only Son, but gave Him up, that He might become our Saviour from eternal death.

We next present a specimen of a little sermon.

THE MAN, CHRIST JESUS.

*“Behold ! a Man.”*—Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.

“Perhaps you will wonder, dear children, what our subject is to be to-day, and what lesson we can learn from this strange text. You know, that when you are told to *behold* anything, it means that you should look attentively. When the Israelites were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents in the wilderness, Moses lifted up a serpent of brass upon a pole, that every one might behold it, and if they beheld they lived ; and when John saw Jesus walking he pointed to him, and said to those who were with him, “*Behold* the Lamb of God !” he meant that they should consider and think about him. And what did John’s disciples see ? not a lamb really, but a man like themselves. John called him the Lamb of God because he had come to be the sacrifice for sin ; and you know that in this way the lamb was a type of Christ.

“Now I want to show you something ; what do you think it is ? a Man, yes, a wonderful Man ; and whilst I try to show him to you, what must you do ? *behold* ; how can you do this ? not with the eye of your body, for there is no man here, and no picture to be seen, but with the eye of your mind. You must give attention to what I say, for I wish you to know this wonderful Man, and there are *four ways* in which I shall describe him.

“I. He is like a *hiding-place* from the *wind*. Who likes to be out in a rough blowing wind ? it is very unpleasant, and sometimes very dangerous. A little while since there was a gale of wind for several days, and the people who lived near the sea were obliged to keep their shutters closed, or the windows would have been broken. I was told of a little boy, who was trying to turn the corner of a street, when the strong wind met him and dashed him first against the wall, and then lifted him up with its power and threw him into the middle of the road. The poor child tried to

stand against it, but it was no use, and he wished that he was safe at home, away from the fury of the wind. This was very bad, but in the country where the Jews lived the wind is far more terrible ; there it comes in a whirlwind, rocks are rent in pieces, strong trees are torn up by the roots, houses are thrown down, and people are killed ; and in the sandy desert there is a scorching furious wind, of which travellers are always afraid. It comes suddenly, and overtakes them perhaps in the middle of some barren plain. The clouds of sand roll quickly on, and threaten to smother them ; and the blast of the wind is like fire, burning them by its touch. They look around in search of help. Oh, what would these poor travellers give for a *hiding-place* ! They urge the camels onwards, and run to escape the danger ; but the wind is swifter than they are, it overtakes them, and they are buried alive.

“This wonderful Man is a *hiding-place* from such a wind as this : he has power to say *Peace* ! and its fury is hushed and over. A company of fishermen were tossing in a little boat upon the water, when suddenly the wind arose, dark clouds gathered quickly and spread themselves over the sky, the sea lashed and foamed, and the vessel on the waves was nearly upset. What could these fishermen do ? Down at the side of the boat their friend was sleeping : they went to him and cried, “Lord, save, we perish ;” and he arose and rebuked the wind and waves, and there was a calm. It was but a word he spoke, dear children, but even the wind heard and obeyed. You know that in the Bible, when people who are wicked and sinful are spoken of, they are compared to chaff (they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away). This is the useless part of the corn : but the wheat is the precious part, and that is gathered safely into the barn, where no wind can blow ; that is its *hiding-place*.

“Do you want a refuge, dear child ? if you think you do, come, and I will show you one. *Behold ! a Man*—Jesus ; he is our *hiding-place* if we put our trust in him ; and

when the wind blows, and the wicked are driven away, if you are close to the Saviour, and keep fast hold upon him, you are safe.

“ II. He is like *a covert from the tempest*.—There were two boys who lived at home with their father and mother ; it was a comfortable, pleasant home, and their parents were kind, and did all they could to make these children happy. But as they grew older, one boy became very discontented and disobedient, he wished to be his own master, and do as he pleased ; and at last he left his nice home, and became a wanderer. He thought that he should enjoy going into the country, and he expected to be very happy, visiting places he had never seen before. He did not miss his home at first ; but presently black clouds gathered in the sky, the thunder rolled, the lightning came with vivid flashes, and the rain and hail poured down. The boy crept under the trees to cover himself, but this was not safe, for the lightning struck the tree, and he was nearly killed. He could not stay there ; he looked around, hoping to see some house where he could find shelter, but there was none. All his feeling of pleasure was gone ; he was wet, and cold, and frightened, and he longed to be at home. He had often heard the thunder, and seen the tempest, but he had never been afraid, because then he was at home, and he knew that his father was near ; but now he could bear it no longer, he resolved to turn back and seek his home again. The tempest had taught him a good lesson about the value of home.

“ This boy is like us,—in a world of sin ; we are wanderers because we like to leave our Father's house, and go in our own ways. Soon the tempest will come—that is, trouble and sorrow in our hearts, like a storm, and what shall we do then ?

“ Dear children, behold *a Man* ! Jesus is a covert from the tempest of sin and sorrow ; he is waiting for you to return to him, and as soon as he sees you coming he will meet you and take you safely into his home.

“III. He is like *rivers of water in a dry place*.—A sandy desert is the driest place of which we know ; there the traveller journeys on day after day and finds no water ; all that he has carried in his leathern bottles is gone, and he longs for a cooling fountain where he may slake his thirst. There are few plants or shrubs that will grow in this barren soil, but presently the traveller comes to one at which he stops ; there is a curious flower upon it like a cup with a lid fitting to the top, it is the famous pitcher-plant, made to grow in desert lands. When the rain pours down, this flower lifts up its lid, and lets the drops fall in until the cup is full, then the lid shuts down, and the water is ready for the first thirsty traveller ; but there is not much, it is soon emptied, and very often it makes you long for water more even than you did before.

“Through those sandy deserts there once travelled a large company of people. There were men, women, and children journeying in parties together ; some rode on camels, and others walked, and they carried with them many poles and sticks to form their tents, and cloths to stretch over them to be their shelter when they rested. But presently they stop ; are they going to pitch their tents ? No : some are fallen down by the road side ; they are fainting—the dryness of the sandy desert, and the scorching heat of the sun, have taken away all their strength ; and there is a cry from all that company, ‘Water, water ! give us water, or we shall die.’ There is a leader for these people, but what can he do ?—can he make water spring up in a desert ? No ; but God can, and by his command this leader strikes the hard, dry rock, and out of it instantly there gushes a river of water, which runs down by the side of the thirsty people, and all can drink. What a change is made in the desert ! a few minutes before they were fainting, and lying down to die ; but now they are refreshed by the water, and their strength has come to them again ; the desert seems a pleasant place, and all are happy again.

“Dear children, when we want anything there is a feel-

ing like thirst in our souls. David says, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.' When we have what we want, we are satisfied and happy; but we must not expect to be happy with the pleasures which this world can give: they are like the cup of water in the pitcher-plants, which the traveller drinks and then wishes for more.

*"Behold! a Man.* He is like rivers of water in a dry place. Jesus says that peace shall flow like a river for his children, and he promises to be in them like a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Have you a thirsting feeling in your heart, dear child? go to this Saviour, and ask him to give you living water—that is, real, lasting happiness.

"Now we come to the fourth thing which this wonderful Man is like.

*"IV. The shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*—It is morning, and the shepherd is leading his flock into the dewy fields where they may take their morning meal; then he guides them to the streams where refreshing waters run; and whilst the day is cool, the little lambs sport about and are happy: but presently the sun mounts up into the sky, it is clear and hot, and no clouds are there to give a pleasant shade. The glittering dew is gone, the grass is scorched and burnt, and the flowers droop and hang their heads; everything looks tired, and the sheep wish for some shady place where they may lie down to rest. They cannot find it themselves; but the shepherd does not forget their wants. He calls them by name, and bids them follow whilst he carries the young lambs, and gently leads the rest out of that hot weary land, down under the shadow of the tall rocks where they may sleep and rest, and be safe from the burning heat. Oh, how glad the sheep are when they come into this pleasant shelter, and they love to get as near under the rock as possible, that they may find the coolest place.

"Dear children, we are like that flock, and sometimes

we feel tired and weary in our hearts ; then we wish to have rest, we think we should like to be comforted. *Behold ! a Man* ; Jesus is like the shadow of a rock,—he gives ease and comfort to those who are tired, and he never forgets the lambs.

“Let me lead you into this shady resting-place. There is a beautiful hymn of Dr. Watts’s about this text ;—I will tell you one verse :

‘Where is the shadow of that rock,  
Which from the sun defends thy flock  
Fain would I dwell among thy sheep,  
Among them feed, among them sleep.’

“Behold this wonderful Man, dear children, *a hiding-place, a covert, a river, a rock*,—and tell me what do you think of Jesus ? Can any one else do so much for you ?—would you not like to speak to him and ask him to be your Saviour and your friend ? I wish you to do so now, because I know he will listen to your prayer, and you will be happy children.”\*

The afternoon address might be upon the plan of the following sketch of a Bible lesson by Mr. Curwen.

#### HOW TO STUDY—EMBLEMS.

Thoroughly to appreciate the force and beauty of an emblem—what does a child require ? Let us consider ; for whatever the child’s feeble understanding and untrained reason may require, that have we to provide. He requires to have on his mind—

1st, a picture of the thing which is shown as an emblem. 2ndly, a picture of the object which it represents, and 3rdly, the two pictures shown together, and compared. His mind, then, in vivid possession of this “image of truth,” is ready to *feel* its personal application, which the teacher may make by question, anecdote, warning, or entreaty.

\* “Sermons for my Infant Class.”

Let these simple rules be remembered, and the teacher need never be at a loss—*how to deal with an emblem*. The following is the outline of a lesson prepared upon this plan. The words in italics are supposed to be “put in” by the children.

“ *We all do fade as a leaf.*”

I. *Picture* :—the leaf—on the tree—in summer, green, spreading out, strong—the stalk holds it firmly to the branch—the winds cannot blow it off :—in autumn it grows brown—shrivels up—the stalk is weak—a little breeze comes—the stalk breaks—the withered leaf is tossed about in the air—soon it lies on the damp ground, and you have passed through a place where the faded leaves lie, and you have kicked them about and trampled them under foot.

II. *Picture* :—I have seen a little child—playing in the wind—strong and ruddy like any of you—I heard his loud and cheerful voice—next day he was taken ill—I saw him—pale—thin—weak—not able to lift his hand—his eye had lost its light—he could only speak in a whisper—soon he died—I saw the funeral go along the street—his body was laid in the grave—worms fed on it.

III. That little child was once like the...*leaf* on the...*tree*. It spreads itself out. It was...*green* and...*strong*, and the winds could not...*blow it off*. But soon the little boy was ill and...*pale* and...*weak*, and then he was like the leaf when it grew...*brown* and...*shriveled*. And soon he...*died* and was...*buried*. That was like the leaf when the...*wind came*, and it fell and you trampled it under...*your feet*. We all do fade as a leaf.

IV. *The application*.—How strong you look now! Perhaps you will soon fade like that little boy, and like the leaf. Where will your souls be when your bodies are laid in the ground? Ask Jesus to take care of your souls when your bodies fade. Your souls will never fade. You cannot tell which leaf of the tree will fall first. Which of you, dear children, will be the first to die?

## CHAPTER VII.

## SPECIAL MEANS OF USEFULNESS.

1. *The Missionary Afternoon.*
2. *The Pence Bank.*
3. *Week Meetings with Parents.*
4. *Visitation—by Teachers—by Special Visitors.*

IT may, perhaps, be well to suggest a few plans of a *special* character, which have been adopted in some infant classes with considerable success.

1. *The missionary afternoon.* This is the devotion of an entire afternoon once a quarter, to the subject of missions, taking each time a different place on the map, and thus visiting the various stations of the missionary field.

Children should be encouraged to love this holy enterprise, to offer prayer for its success, and to contribute to its funds, but what they give should be given with a *knowledge* of the work which is being done, and without the slightest urging. The appeals for money should not be too frequent. Parents and children alike object to it, and the feelings such applications arouse are not favourable to the cause. Few children have money of their own, and many cannot possibly obtain it, yet none like to be behind their fellows. We have known many a poverty-stricken child weep bitter tears, not because he could not aid the cause of missions, but because he could not do as others did. It is a

good thing to devote the money the class contributes to something specific. They like to see, and their little thoughts go out with, as their prayers often follow, the things sent ; while nothing delights them so much as having "an answer back." Thus, some classes expend the collection upon the purchase of scripture maps and pictures, for the use of infant schools at missionary stations, or for the support of a native teacher.

An afternoon thus spent affords a pleasant variety, and if any objects of interest can be exhibited, or a missionary be present to tell his own simple tale, so much the better. It affords one of the best kinds of reward for children. It is regarded as a treat, and looked forward to with eager expectation.

2. *The Pence Bank.* This may be established for the *elder* children, and in connexion with the junior classes of the main school. It forms no part of the Sunday plan, but should be open on the Monday, or some other day. Conducted with regularity, it will cherish habits of providence, and little children of four years of age will present their weekly penny with all the decorum of adult depositors.\*

3. *Week Meetings.* The teacher's work does not

\* The first institution of this kind established in London, was commenced by the minister of Wycliffe Chapel, many years ago, and has succeeded far beyond the expectation of its founder.

close with the Sabbath. It is an every-day duty; and to make parents feel that we care for their children, and love them, we must show it by interesting ourselves in their home concerns. Invitations (by sections) to the children and parents to occasional meetings are highly prized. They afford the opportunity of obtaining a closer insight into character, and give us a ready passport at all times to the humble dwellings of the poor.

4. *Visitation.* This is a work belonging to the teacher, and, to be useful, must be systematically attended to. It is far too much neglected, and little do we know the amount of moral power we are deprived of, by not availing ourselves of the privilege. Happy is the teacher who knows his children at *home*, who acquaints himself with the concerns of their every-day life. The very assurance by the child, that the teacher knows his parents, is, in point of discipline, a fulcrum upon which the lever may be placed with the utmost advantage, and the appeal is conclusive.

But there is another kind of visitation, for which a special agency is needed. We refer to that which should be made on the Sabbath, during the unexplained absence of children. It will be apparent that the teacher cannot do this. Supplemental aid is demanded, and he must look to the church to afford it. Such visitors will take the cards of absentees\* in the morning, and noting the cause of

\* See remarks on "CLASS REQUISITES," page 76.

absence in each case, will return them before the close of the afternoon school. Facts which would otherwise be unknown, are thus brought to the knowledge of the teacher,\* and in cases of illness, he is made aware of the necessity of his own attendance. Surely there are some in every church, who, though unable from physical causes to endure the confinement of the school, would gladly undertake this most unexceptionable and useful post of duty.

\* George Roberts, a boy of nine years old, had been very irregular, but he always pleaded that his mother did not get him ready, and so he could not come to school in the morning. A visitor called one Sunday morning :—“Good morning; where’s George?” “Why, gone to school.” “But he is not there!” “Not there!—he went with Joe Fletcher, over the way there.” “But he is not there either,” said the visitor. “Well, you ‘maze me, sir, I send him reg’lar.” “But you see,” said the visitor, showing the attendance list, “that he does not come.” A new light breaks in upon the mother’s mind. Her boy is deceiving her; he has done so long—it is a habit, and no one has told her. George comes home at one o’clock. “Well lad, and where’s thou been?” The boy does as he has done a score times before; he lies, and braves it out, “telling the text” as glibly as if he had heard it, and that with interest. The poor mother undeceives him, and shows him his sin. We were to blame that she did not know before. Is it likely the boy will play truant again? No, he knows that the visitor will be down upon him at the very time of his absence.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DISCIPLINE.

1. *Authority must be enforced.*
2. *Punishments.*
3. *Mode of reproof.*
4. *Rewards—the ticket system.*

1. THERE are few subjects, perhaps, less studied by the teacher than that of discipline, and yet it requires, in such a work as this, prominent notice. As “order is heaven’s first law,” so authority is the chief instrument in education. Obedience is the first step towards religion. And if an infant class is to be well conducted, there must be the most uncompromising authority; not power injudiciously employed, but that wholesome discipline of which the poet speaks, when he says,

“Such authority  
Is but the graver countenance of love.”

Lax discipline engenders self-indulgence and obstinacy,—severity, mutiny, and rebellion; while as Dr. Johnson says, “severe treatment may be the way to govern children, but it is not the way to mend them.”

We have known teachers, under very false impressions on this subject, lecture, threaten, punish, and take every way but the right one, to correct

disobedience, and of course in vain. If the teacher is as we have described him, he will know of how little value are knocks and blows, and how potent is the firmness of love. Have we not seen the contrast in our schools? There is one child whose spirit has been cowed, broken, and depressed by severe measures, trembling at the teacher's presence, fearing to meet his look. Another, open and frank, cheerfully awaits his teacher's coming, and holds out the hand to welcome him. From which do we get the obedience we seek? This is the question for the teacher of infants. Then, again, a child's cry may express one of two things: it may betoken uneasiness or pain, or it may be the result of a desire to have its "own way." It were folly not to distinguish between an appeal for help, and an outbreak of passion, and yet some teachers make crying of itself a punishable offence.

Authority does not require a harsh or angry tone. A teacher loses all his dignity and influence the moment he loses self-control, and betrays temper in his voice. A calm and decided tone is the dictate of affection. Austerity will drive our children from the class. Their attendance there is voluntary, and as the instruction of a severe teacher cannot be very attractive, his discipline will soon deprive him of the presence of his auditory.

2. We perfectly concur with the fair authoress of the Prize Essay on Sunday Schools, in her re-

marks upon rewards, but with the utmost deference for her experience, we entirely dissent from her views upon the subject of *punishments*, as found in the following passage :

“ Corporeal punishment and expulsion are both sometimes necessary. There are many who object to the use of stripes at any time. Our appeal is to the Scriptures ; we take the word of God, and find there, ‘ Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and so save his soul from hell.’ ‘ He that spareth the rod, hateth his son.’ ‘ Withhold not correction from thy son ; if thou beat him with the rod, he shall not die.’ Can language be plainer ? Have we any right to alter it so as to suit our preconceived notions ? Corporeal punishment is often effectual in saving a child when everything else fails. To prevent mistakes, we must define what we mean by the term : not a rap on the head ; not shaking or pulling, pushing or struggling ; not blows or kicks ; not punishment with the rod when the superintendent is angry ; but calm, deliberate flogging, so severely inflicted as to make a child really suffer. A little girl, about six, whose mother was a thorough profligate, committed such indecencies, and used language so revolting, that it was deemed impossible to retain her in the school. Every means but flogging was resorted to, and entirely failed in effecting the least improvement. The superintendent said she was too young for expulsion to benefit her ; and though flogging was against the rules of the school, he determined to try it. Little miss soon gave him an opportunity ; he solemnly led her into the vestry by herself, and inflicted a very severe chastisement ; then left her alone for about half an hour. On returning he sat down by her, and with tears of kindness talked to her about God, sin, hell, and Jesus, till her little heart was melted ; and from that hour she was an altered child.

“ Corporeal punishment, with us, includes all the accompaniments here mentioned. The younger the child, the

more valuable this mode of correction. Little children of three or four will sometimes, when offended, throw themselves into violent passions, kicking and screaming. In all such cases, when the fit of anger has subsided, moderate infliction of bodily pain is the best punishment. We have seen superintendents allow themselves to be governed by children of three or four years of age, permitting them, instead of going to their class, to sit or walk with their brother or sister. This is highly injurious to the formation of the child's moral character.

"A superintendent's greatest difficulty often arises from the misconduct of the scholars at public worship. A few strokes with a cane inflicted on the hand of every naughty child, immediately after the conclusion of the service, will effect a material change for the better. We do not recommend this plan ; it is the best we know, but we do not like it, for a cane should not be in daily use. Flogging is recommended to be impartially tried in all cases of direct wilful disobedience on the part of little children, persisted on in the face of the whole school. It will be found that when the infant classes are taught separately, corporeal punishment is wholly unnecessary." \*

Notwithstanding the plea of scripture authority, we cannot consent to the introduction of that "calm deliberate flogging, so severely inflicted as to make a child really suffer," and to its becoming part of the code of the infant class on the ground that the younger the child, the more valuable is this mode of correction ;" nor can we see how the force of the argument is altered by the fact of the infant class being "taught separately," if it be true that "little children of three and four" *ought* to be thus punished. If "love is to be the atmo-

\* Mrs. David's "Prize Essay" (ch. vi. p. 203).

sphere of the class,"\* let rods and canes be for ever put aside. No teacher who is qualified need ever, in our judgment, resort to physical force. Not a touch, not a blow—no hand need be raised to chastise where a loving heart exerts its benign influence. This system may humble and crush, but such chastening does not amend. Let us have no appeals to fear, unless we wish to reduce our pupils to bondage, but let us claim the higher privilege of pleading at a nobler tribunal. Our appeal is to principles and to parental authority. The scourge has no place in the infant class. It may beget a slavish and servile obedience, but this is not the obedience of the Bible. The child's idea of punishment, when thus administered, is that it gratifies the teacher. "Do you punish me because you love me?" said a little girl. "Most certainly," replied her teacher; "did you think it was a pleasant thing to punish?" "Why, when I tease my little brothers, it makes me glad to see them uncomfortable, and I thought perhaps grown-up people feel the same when they punish us."

Wolsey, in his letter to a schoolmaster, says,— "One point that we think proper to be noticed as of first importance is, that the tender age of youth be never urged with severe blows, or harsh threats, or, indeed, any sort of tyranny. For by this injudicious treatment, all sprightliness of genius either is destroyed, or it is at any rate considerably

\* "Prize Essay," p. 198.

damped." An experienced infant teacher, whose class numbers above 150 little ones, says,—" In my own school there has never been punishment further than the detention of a child for the purpose of a little quiet talk about a fault, or a refusal to shake hands at parting. This has been enough for children of all temperaments and characters. Severer methods may produce a greater *appearance of order*, but I cannot believe that they ever put the child upon *the way to govern himself*, and certainly they do not tend to what we chiefly want, the conversion of the heart." Stow says, " corporeal punishment in schools tends to harden the heart or break the spirit." We may rest assured, the best discipline is based upon freedom, mildness, sympathy, and affection ; and, with Roger Ascham, we believe it true, that " children are sooner allured by love, than driven by beating ;" and if so in the classical school, how much more in the Sabbath school, and the *infant* class. Locke admits that rigour is needed in early years, where tenderness is usually displayed, but he opposes all corporeal punishment. " Such sort of slavish discipline," he says, " makes a slavish temper." Ingenuous shame, and the apprehension of displeasure, are the only true or necessary restraints.

3. If we were asked what *modes of reproof* should be adopted, we should say, Let the punishment be as mild as the nature of the case will permit, and such as will have an improving influence, taking

care that while we gain ascendancy over the mind, we keep a firm hold of the affections of the heart.

“ Speak kindly to the little child,  
Lest from his heart you drive away  
The light of love ;”

Employ no severe reproaches, or cutting satire, nor bring him in front of the gallery for public and ignominious exposure, seeing that shame will never effectually deter children from doing what is wrong ; and if it do, it is the fear of man, and not the fear of God, that is before their eyes. Neither fines nor tasks are needed. We firmly believe that the eye of the teacher, and his mild reproving voice, will work far more wonderful results than any instrument of bodily torture. Removal from the seat, detention after school, expostulation and prayer, are more effectual than any punishment we know ; and sure we are, from some experience ourselves, and from the accumulated testimony of others, that *the power of gentleness is irresistible*.

Therefore we say, that while obedience must be enforced, we must exercise great care and discrimination in what we require, for the *thing ordered must be done*. “ Make but few laws, and see that they are well obeyed when made.” A child must never be suffered to have its own way. The contest may be long and painful, but firmness will gain the victory, and once for all. The teacher’s word once passed, must not be broken, any more in his requirements of the children, than in his praise or

blame of their efforts. Health, temper, constitutional weakness, all have a decided effect upon the conduct and mental powers, and allowance must be made accordingly. Fretfulness may usually be traced to physical causes, and also timidity and nervousness. Listlessness, or apparent laziness, often arises from high imaginative powers, which leave a child dreaming upon some point that has caught his fancy, long after the subject has been disposed of.

Discipline may be carried on most effectually without any outward acts. Constant surveillance is the best system. Not a suspicious, but a watchful eye, ever upon our children, will anticipate and prevent evils, which an occasional look finds out only when the deed is done. After all, let us strive to keep our children well employed, all at work, and all interested, remembering the wise couplet,

“Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.”

4. If the dispensation of punishments is difficult, the distribution of rewards is scarcely less so. Great discrimination is needed, and the most intimate acquaintance with the character and temperament of our children. Locke speaks of “a nice study of children’s tempers,” before punishment is decided on, and the same thing must be said of *natural abilities* in the case of rewards.

For this reason we see serious objections to *the ticket system*, especially in the infant class. Infants

have not the control of their own time. It does not depend on themselves, generally speaking, whether they come early or not. Neither have all children the same *capacity* for committing to memory or receiving instruction. One may have tried all the week long to remember the verse, and fail—another, without an effort, repeats it. The reward should rather be given to the former than the latter, and yet we do not so adjudge it. We reward intellectual, at the expense of moral qualities.

As the highest style of punishment ought to be the disapprobation of the teacher, so self-approval and the teacher's love should be the *greatest* reward. Let us give praise and encouragement, but not gifts and tickets. We believe the system fosters envy, hatred, and uncharitableness, to a great degree. The tickets are looked upon too often as money, and have a currency of their own. Elder children purchase or steal them from the little ones, and bartering and trafficking are carried on to a fearful extent. If rewards are given, let it be to the whole class,—a book for each, adapted to the capacity of each, and only withheld in cases of grave delinquency.

## CHAPTER IX.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES NEEDING SPECIAL ATTENTION.

1. *Infant Piety.*
2. *Removals.*
3. *Retention of Influence.*
4. *How success is to be calculated.*

## INFANT PIETY.

1. Let not a teacher be surprised to hear a child say, “Teacher, what must I do to be saved?” Are we prepared for such an inquiry, are we earnestly *looking out* for it? And yet this we have a right to look for, for to this the needle of our compass always points. We have seen that it is reasonable to expect to see the simple faith of a little child, looking to God for mercy and pardon through Jesus Christ, and we are at fault if our attention is ever diverted from this our avowed object. Let the influence of our class-room be like that of the dwelling of Fénélon, where an infidel was residing for a brief space, but long enough to force him to exclaim, “Let me go from this house, or I shall be a Christian.” Would that our influence were of such a constraining character. Nevertheless, the greatest caution is necessary in ascertaining what are the *evidences* of a child’s piety, and whether, at so early an age, he should be encouraged to make a public profession

of his faith. How should we treat a child, the subject of such serious impressions? The practice too often has been either to discourage and keep back, or to precipitate a decision. Is there no middle course? Let us adopt it. Not too hopeful, not too credulous, quietly waiting, carefully observing. If fruit appear, examine it, and do not take it to be good without the scrutiny. Todd says,—“The judgment day will doubtless show multitudes of cases in which a child was led to the foot of Calvary, and so near the cross, that he could almost touch it, but who from that point turned back to sin and ruin in consequence of not having a teacher who kept the conversion of his soul constantly before him.” If this be true, and who can doubt it, what fear should we entertain lest we incur so great a responsibility!

Let the utmost freedom of access be given for earnest conversation and prayer. The child will talk to his teacher about his difficulties and doubts, more readily than to his relations. We must search after motives, and look to the conflict within, not placing so much dependence upon words, as upon character and habits. A devotional frame of mind, a love of truth, and a spirit of self-sacrifice, are the sure tokens of a work of grace within. “Oh,” said a little girl, “if people want to go to heaven, why don’t they get ready?” Infancy is the best time for this preparation. Let us look for piety in our infant classes.

We need to correct an error. Many children are led to a decision by a fear of death that takes possession of them. Teachers must beware of this. The ignorant and the guilty stand in awe of death, but the heart of the little child should be familiar with it. At the very threshold, it seems hard to talk of the end of the journey ; but since that journey may be short, it is wise to look to the end. Not with the tone of sadness, or with the brow of gloom,—faith, hope, and joy, require not these ; but at the grave of infancy, in the place of tombs, we would have children become conversant with death, and learn how God giveth his beloved sleep. The transplanted flower, the victor's palm, the crown of glory, the heavenly home, these are the themes for our discourse, as we

“Walk thoughtful on the silent solemn shore,  
Of that vast ocean we must sail so soon.”

#### REMOVALS.

2. When solid food is required, the teeth appear, adapted in kind and number to the wants of the body. Thus it is with the mind, and taking into consideration the time that a child has been in the class, and his character, a teacher may soon judge when is the fitting season for transferring him to the main school, and usually this will occur about the eighth year. After such a course of training, this separation will be a severe trial, but it is a bounden duty, and no teacher, by giving way to

his own feeling, ought to obstruct the interests of any child. His affection entwines round the heart of the teacher, and it would be a cruel thing to cut down the clinging tendrils. Happily, this is not necessary, and the removal by no means precludes the continuance of that intercourse which has been so beneficial.

#### RETENTION OF INFLUENCE.

3. Children should leave us reluctantly. It would be a bad sign if there were no regrets at parting. Usually, the feelings are overwhelmed, and this is a proof of the deep interest the child has in his teacher. Such interest gives influence, and we must hold fast the clue to the heart, wherever it goes, determined, as far as we can, to aid it in achieving the rugged paths and steep ascents of future life. What becomes of our children? Alas! we lose them in the general crowd. It ought not so to be, for if we were wise, we should bind them by a magic power, not irksome, but pleasant.

Individual teaching we object to, but this *individual dealing* we heartily commend. We should still visit their houses, as far as we are able. We should hold their names in our pocket-books, as of old. We should keep up communication with their new teachers, for just as the medical man who has had our health in his care from infancy, know more of us than any other, so, without

interfering, we can give advice and suggestions of the most valuable kind.

By all means, let us encourage a continuance of the *correspondence*. Letters can reach where our voice cannot be heard, and beyond the reach of our vision, our influence may stretch far and wide, an electric telegraph of love. The letter thus written, neglected though it be, is yet seed sown, and that such seed is not lost, the lives of Harlan Page, Cranfield, and others, abundantly testify. Ah, from what depths of misery might we rescue many a fallen one, did we only know their case,—misery from which, if this intercourse had been kept up, they might have been preserved! “How do you manage these great boys?” said a London visitor to the lady who superintended a large school, which no one else could control. Her open desk displayed the instruments of talismanic power. Bundles of letters took the place of the canes and rods. She corresponded with the boys, and held her surprising influence by this means; for, as truly as we say, “*Litera scripta manet*,” may we aver that this class of influence is undying.

#### HOW TO CALCULATE SUCCESS.

4. The optician makes his compass, he does his best, and leaves it. The watchmaker constructs his chronometer, the author writes his book. They each complete a work, but how seldom do they know the results! Did that needle, pointing to the

pole, guide any wanderer across the ocean to the desired haven? Does that watch, passing from clime to clime in the possession of its owner, still maintain its original precision? Has that book led men to think correctly, to act righteously, and to teach others so to do? Who can tell, and of whom is the teacher to learn the results of his labours? They do appear at times, as solitary instances, they would oftener present their testimony were he more diligent in his inquiries, but the fruits of faithfulness do not generally gladden our eye. Let the patience of hope cheer the heart. The record is on high!

## CHAPTER X.

## THE RELATIONS SUSTAINED BY THE INFANT CLASS.

1. *To the Sunday School.*
2. *To the Day School.*
3. *To Parents.*
4. *To the Ministry and the Church of Christ.*
5. *Reasons for encouragement.*

1. *To the Sunday school.* The relation of the infant class to the Sunday school is a subject of some importance, and while we cannot discuss the question here at length, we would strongly urge the necessity of a *separate management*, that is, that the teacher, in his plans and operations, should be his own master, unfettered by any but the general rules of the school. Since the best teacher is selected for the work, and seeing that his plans are of necessity peculiar and diversified, the fullest confidence should be reposed in him.

The benefits derived by the main school are incalculable. The children who are to fill the classes, come to them already trained in habits of order, obedience, and attention. Able to read the Scriptures, and to understand what they read, they are *intelligent* scholars. The school becomes a different place. The teachers find their work full of interest and reward ; the superintendent sees the

results of the infant training, wherever he casts his eye, and nowhere more than in the senior classes, for it is a fact, that those who come earliest abide the longest. The influence upon the whole school, is like leaven in the meal ; it is indeed, almost miraculous.\*

2. *To the day school.* In this day, when these two institutions ought to be so united as to be one in sympathy and effort, the reciprocal advantages are of the highest order. For the sake of free and religious education, how do we glory in the noble advance of our Sunday-school institution ; and for the sake of the Sunday schools, how delightful is it to see the wide-spread efforts now making to elevate the character and increase the efficiency of our day schools. The day school must be pervaded by the

\* The Report of the Wycliffe Chapel Sunday Schools for 1846 gives the following valuable information :—“This school was one of the first in the metropolis where the infant-class system was adopted, and there is no body of teachers in the kingdom who owe more to its introduction. Its value and efficiency will be seen in the following fact. The school, as a whole, is divided into two parts, the Bible classes, 53 in number, with 429 children ; and the Infant class, comprising 281 infants, from 2 to 8 years of age. That the main school is benefited, is fully demonstrated by the fact, that for the most part, the children have passed through this elementary course, and that they come prepared intelligently to receive instruction in the upper classes of the school, and the fact is, that *every child* in the main school (429 in number), *with the exception of four boys* recently admitted, can read the Bible.”

religious element; and in this sense, things secular cannot be separated from things sacred. Education, wherever given, must be religious to be worthy of the name, and while this is the case, the day school and the Sunday school stand inseparably connected, and their efforts in behalf of infancy must be consentaneous. The type of the latter has predetermined the character of the former, and laid the foundations of public education for the poor deeply in the religious organization of the country.

3. *To parents.* The influence of children is always great, but at no period of life is it stronger than in infancy. A little child will be heard and answered, and will gain access to the rugged heart of the father, even in the hour of deepest abstraction, when all other influences would fail. "How can I forget that my children go to the infant school?" said a good mother, "they are always talking about it." If it were only a missionary effort, it would be a noble one, to send forth these little messengers, deeply imbued with the spirit of our teaching, and carrying home the atmosphere of the class. As we have seen, the parents are relieved and comforted in many ways. Rude, ignorant, and rebellious children, are transformed into mild, loving, gentle spirits; the discipline at home, often that of mere force, is modified and coupled with affection. The parents' hearts are gladdened, and their anxieties diminished, and by this feeble instrumentality, not

unfrequently, under God's blessing, through Christ, their souls are saved.

4. *To the ministry and the church of Christ.* An honoured and deceased minister leaves his dying testimony to the fact, that "the Sabbath school generally supplies the sanctuary with its most intelligent hearers," and says, "the Christian ministry would be maimed of its best instrument, of its right arm, were this specific co-operation abolished, and the church would suffer no less than the ministry."\* If it be so now, what would the result be if all those children who come beneath such influences had been trained in infancy? Taught in the class to understand, in the separate service to worship, with their minds stored with Bible knowledge, and the picture we present of the whole school being true, then the little one would become a thousand, and instead of our churches languishing, and needing constant efforts for *revival*, we should attain to that which is far more desirable — healthy, regular, and accelerating *progression*. The infant class is the foundation of the school, and the school is the hope and life of the Christian church, for from thence shall come, trained from very infancy, the "sacramental host of God's elect," the soldiers of the cross.

#### REASONS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT.

5. To such as are earnestly and conscientiously

\* "Institutions of Popular Education," by Rev. Dr. R. W. Hamilton.

committed to this work, there is the most solid ground for encouragement. For, looking at the educational enterprise in which they are enlisted, history and experience yield abundant hope. On all hands, testimony concurs in favour of religious training, and few are found to resist the application of the principle to infancy. We have seen how natural and successful a process it is, how readily teachers may prepare themselves, how easily accommodation and apparatus may be supplied, how eager children are to come, and how willing parents are that they should do so, how marked are the results upon the children themselves, and through them upon the school, the family, the church, and the world; and we have gathered encouragements as we have gone along, enough to "lift up" the heart of any teacher, and to stimulate the efforts of all who are engaged in the work. Surely this were enough, imperfectly as it is presented, to lead to increased vigour—where the system is adopted, inquiry—where it is not, and earnest prayer everywhere, for the success of our high mission.

It is computed that "scarcely one Sunday school in twenty, throughout the country, has an infant class, and that in England alone at least *one hundred thousand* children might at once be added to our numbers were an infant class, in connexion with every school, established forthwith."\* What more inducement do we need to prosecute this work,

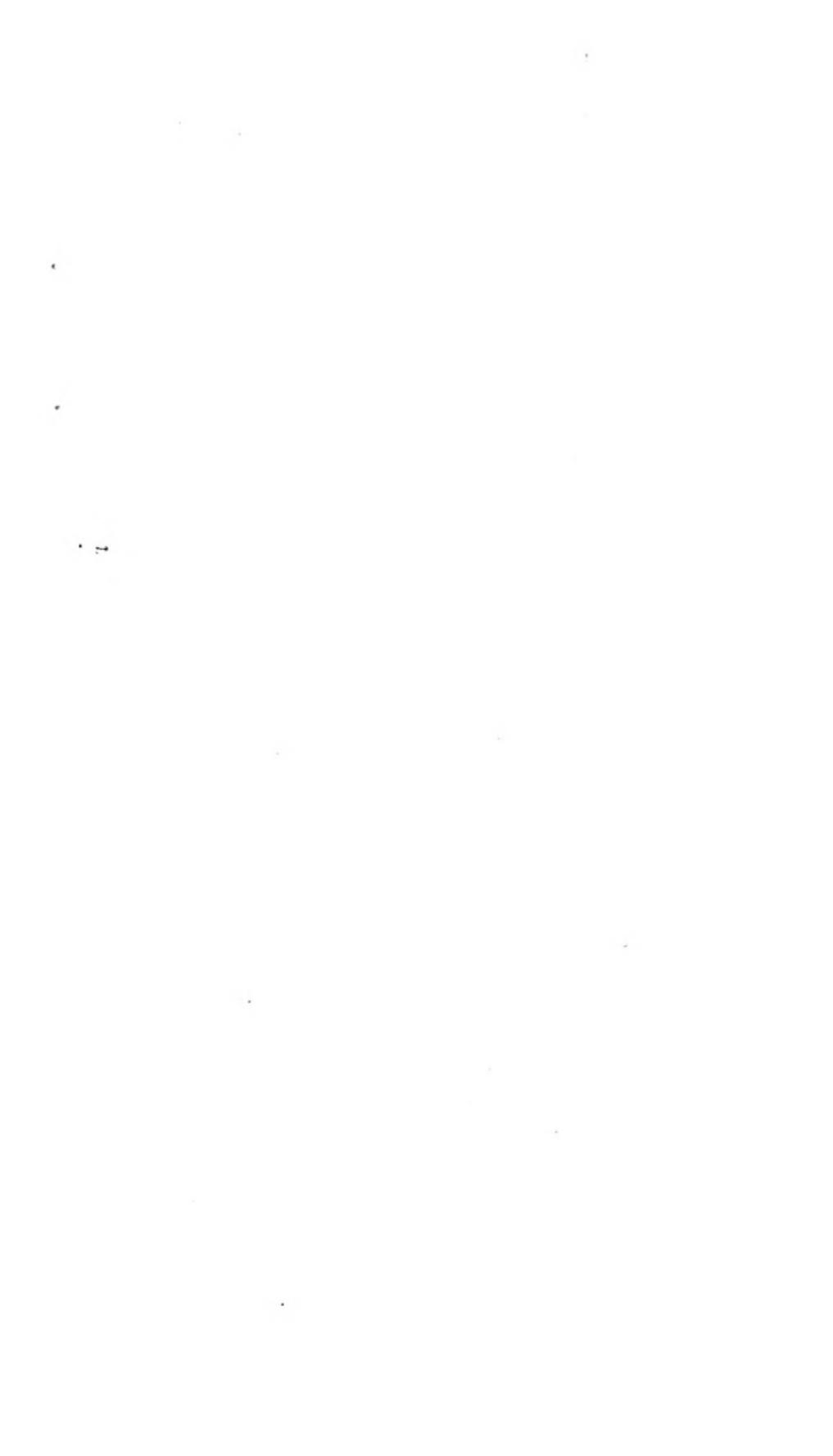
\* "Teacher's Magazine," vol. iii. p. 72.

which were worth the doing, if even it were to teach but one little child to "*hold fast that which is good*," saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Let us see to it, that the first steps of their pilgrimage are wisely taken, and our children shall be led on "to the everlasting hills."

Again we repeat, the Sunday school is not complete without an infant class, and who shall venture to stand opposed to the effort in favour of its establishment? We would urge such a one to consider well the responsibility he incurs. Were it permitted us to trace the countless thousands of children who have received instruction in our schools, we should find, with something to cheer us, abundant cause for regret and deep sorrow. Wreathing the cypress with the laurel, let us listen to the voice of instruction in the warnings which rise and reach our eye on every side. From the grave, where sleep many of our elder scholars—from heaven, where dwell many redeemed ones, brought to Jesus through our care—from the busy scenes of human life, where many toil on through trial and temptation—from the church of Christ, of which some form the ornament and strength,—and, alas! from the haunts of sin, the unpictured scenes of darkness and pollution, frequented, we fear, by many who once sat as scholars in our classes—and from hell itself, there comes a voice, mingled and powerful, that bids us seize and apply the scriptural, yet newly-adopted truth, that infancy

is the season of impression. If we do not train infants for heaven, their straying feet will quickly tread the paths of the destroyer.

Time is short, age is ripening, the cares of the world press on. Let the work to be done, be done at once, and well done,—done as to Him who did and suffered all for us, and in the spirit of earnest and believing prayer. Early in life, gather in the lambs of the fold, gently deal with and kindly lead them on their way ;—while beneath your eye watch for their precious souls, knowing that you have to give account ; and when removed from your care, follow them with admonition and entreaty ; and if the moving crowd of human beings should shut them out from view, let your prayers still rise on their behalf to Him who ever marks their way. Your influence may extend where your eye fails in vision ; and some whom the billows have driven far aside, may yet meet you in the haven of eternal rest



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